



## **Between Protest and Privilege: South Asian Religious Signifiers and the US Counterculture**

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KEYWORDS: COUNTERCULTURE, USA, RELIGION, SOUTH HINDU, MEDIA

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### **Introduction**

The 1960s and 1970s saw an immense proliferation of signifiers and practices associated with South Asian religions in the US. This trend, prevalent first and foremost in popular culture, had a vital impact on the self-expression of certain groups of young adults with regard to lifestyle choices, such as living arrangements and religious and spiritual practices. Especially those associated with the counterculture of that time adopted such signifiers and practices into their lifestyles, oftentimes disregarding their original contexts and meanings, and transforming them to suit their own contexts of living. This essay investigates the end to which South Asian religious signifiers were de-contextualised and partly evacuated of their initial meanings in order to replenish them with new ones relevant to a US-American national context in the said decades.

The question of why countercultural youth have been enthusiastic about non-Judeo-Christian religions, especially Hinduism and Buddhism, is, of course, not new. From internet fora<sup>1</sup> to more rigorously academic books and essays (e. g. Oliver 2014, Perone 2004, Bivins



2007), many spaces have been devoted to answering this question. The answers are usually somewhat similar in locating the appeal of these religions in their difference from and perceived opposition to Christianity as the hegemonic religion associated with the status quo (Oliver 2014: 135, Perone 2004: 149). It is, in short, the alleged novelty and difference of those religious systems that constituted their attraction to Westerners, especially those dissatisfied with existing socio-political conditions. A second similarity is the reproach of Orientalism and cultural appropriation directed at the counterculture: Rather than exhibiting an interest in understanding the complexity of Hindu or Buddhist religious experience and expression, countercultural youth are often said to have projected their own desires onto these religions (Oliver 2014: 175).

To briefly comment on the first similarity of such answers, one has to note that the 1960s and 1970s were not the first decades in which Hinduism and Buddhism played a prominent role in US culture. As Catherine Albanese points out, nineteenth century alternative spiritualities from Transcendentalism to Theosophy used Hinduism "as a source of occult and metaphysical thought", even before Swami Vivekananda brought greater attention to this religion at the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893 (1992: 301). Furthermore, during the late 1950s and early 1960s Beat Generation authors started to familiarise themselves with concepts pertaining to Buddhism and Hinduism and incorporated this knowledge, significantly transforming it, into their literature (ibid. 316, Oliver 2014: 11). Hence, an argument regarding the appeal of the novel and extraordinary aspect of Hinduism and Buddhism does not hold up to thorough scrutiny, as the use of these religions to express discontent with established lifestyles has been present in American literature and culture since the 1830s.

Also, novelty and appropriation tend to be named as discrete characteristics of the countercultural fascination with South Asian religions. This essay suggests viewing these two aspects as equally important to an understanding of this fascination. The argument here is based on the thesis that the use of South Asian religious (particularly Hindu) symbolism was attractive to countercultural groups of the 1960s and 1970s on account of an interplay of two aspects: On the one hand, Hindu symbols and practices allowed these groups to frame their grievances more effectively and, especially, to engage in a process which Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow term "frame bridging" (2000: 624). On the other hand, the integration of these symbols and practices into countercultural lifestyles and forms of



protest allowed for the activation of hegemonic discourses and stereotypes as well as for the incorporation of practices of discrimination and discipline structurally homologous to those found in mainstream society. This ambivalent use of South Asian religious signifiers is the effect of two not always conscious and seemingly opposed desires encompassed by the counterculture, namely to bring about progressive social and political change, but also to assert and perpetuate the privileges granted by the society against which the protest is directed, and to do so by perpetuating its discourses and practices.

To substantiate this thesis it is useful to combine Frame Theory and Cultural Studies approaches, which allows differentiating ambivalent meanings within signifiers operating as frames. Stuart Hall notes that codes used to formulate messages can be decoded from a "dominant-hegemonic position" (1993: 101), upholding and stabilising existing power-relations, from a "negotiated" position (ibid.: 102) that corresponds with but also differs from "dominant definitions" (ibid.), or from an "oppositional" stance (ibid.: 103) marked by resistance to hegemony. This essay applies the same differentiation to signifiers functioning as frames, postulating the occurrence of ambivalent frames that superficially engage oppositional codes and positions, yet are also structured hegemonically on a deeper level.

A frame in this context is defined as an "interpretative schema" (Noakes 2000: 657, Kniss and Vande Berg 2008: 90) that reduces complexity of real life issues. Social movements use frames to communicate their grievances and proposed solutions to the public and to potential movement adherents. Frames are also used to "bridge", or discursively unite, different movements and their respective goals, "linking [...] two or more ideologically congruent but structurally unconnected frames regarding a particular issue or problem" (Benford & Snow 2000: 624). This process creates connections "between a movement and individuals, through the linkage of a movement organization with an unmobilized sentiment pool or public opinion cluster, or across social movements" (ibid.). Frame bridging will thus often give rise to a "master frame", which is "elastic", "inclusive", and "broad in terms of scope" (ibid.: 618), prompting various groups and interests to identify with it and unite behind it. Frames derive from "the extant stock of meanings, beliefs, ideologies, practices, values, myths, narratives, and the like [...]" (ibid.: 629).



These available meanings and signifiers are arranged according to a “discursive opportunity structure” that determines their proliferation and acceptability within a society at a specific point in time (Koopmans & Statham 1999: 228). Before analysing three examples of ambivalent frames operating within and between US countercultural groups of the 1960s and 1970s, one must therefore first turn to the alterations in the “discursive opportunity structure” that facilitated a basic literacy in South Asian religious symbolism and predisposed publics to receive corresponding signifiers favourably.

### **The proliferation of South Asian religious signifiers in the US in the 1960s and 1970s**

Frequently, the alliance of famous Westerners with religious organisations that based their tenets on some form of Hinduism fostered an increased pop-cultural awareness. Especially the members of the musical group The Beatles, on account of their enormous popularity, managed to arouse interest in Indian cultural and religious elements through their well-documented personal interest and their travels to sites of spiritual importance in India; the incorporation of Indian musical elements into their art played a vital role in the cultivation of the said Western interest, as well (Oliver 2014: 65).

At the same time, religious organisations headed by Indian spiritual teachers started to export their teachings to the West successfully in the same decade. The two most influential Hinduism-related organisations in this context are the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) and Transcendental Meditation (TM). As Sam Singh points out, ISKCON’s founder A. C. Bhaktivedanta availed himself of a general cultural enthusiasm for “Eastern thought”, advancing speedily to the status of a central figure for the adherents of the hippie movement in the 1960s—a status facilitated by his acquaintance with prominent figures such as Beat-Generation poet Allen Ginsberg and Beatle George Harrison.<sup>2</sup> In the late 1960s, ISKCON had already established chapters in New York, San Francisco, and Montreal, and increased its global presence to “108 temples on six continents” by the late 1970s.<sup>3</sup> Soon after its establishment in America in 1965, the organisation’s members became recognisable not only by their characteristic chanting, but also by their “colorful pink and yellow robes” (Albanese 1992: 307). It is this organisation in particular that upheld a pronouncedly monastic way of life and encouraged their



devotees to live communally and to remain celibate and unmarried (ibid.: 307, 308).

Similar to ISKCON's employment of celebrities to promote its cause, the followers of TM and its inventor, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, relied on the favour of "a counterculture in bloom" and the implicit advertisement of a prominent group of adherents, among them Mia Farrow, Shirley MacLaine, and other sportspeople and musicians.<sup>4</sup> Woodrum adds the Beach Boys to this group and points out that the time from 1965 to 1968 also saw vast media interest in TM: Maharishi Mahesh Yogi seemed to be a constant presence on television, radio, and in the print media, being finally termed "Guru of the Counterculture" (Woodrum 1982: 94). Woo cites figures suggesting that the 1970s were the most successful years for this organisation, with about 600,000 adherents by mid decade.<sup>5</sup>

Both of the presented organisations used forms of Hindu piety related to the ancient *bhakti* movement of devotion (Rochford 2007: 3). This movement advocated a communal lifestyle with one's fellow devotees and the performance of eulogies in the form of songs in order to achieve unity with the divine (Shattuck 1999: 95). The practice of repeating one of the divine's many names as a *mantra*, and to do so in the form of a chant, was one of the elements of *bhakti* religious piety, as well (ibid.). These practices are vital to both TM and the rituals of ISKCON. Especially the latter is often identified as the chief representative of the *bhakti* tradition in the United States (Albanese 1992: 307).

TM was at that time also taught in high schools in New York, with 14 more states in favour of its propagation; around the US, 50 universities had already implemented classes teaching TM by that time.<sup>6</sup> The reasons for this support in education were motivated by the positive effects TM had on the students' interpersonal relations and decreased drug use.<sup>7</sup> Other than the appeal created by famous adherents, the organisation aimed to exploit claims regarding TM's health benefits, as it reportedly "lowered blood pressure, relieved stress, increased intelligence, and even reduced crime in areas in which a significant proportion of the people were meditating" (Albanese 1992: 306). To generate further appeal, the organisation underplayed its religiosity, until a court ruling in 1979 clearly defined it as a religion, banning it from schools and other public institutions (ibid.: 306f.).

Individuals practicing ascetic lifestyles and performing the rigors of such practices as yoga and meditation are to this day, in some relig-



ious and devotional communities, thought to possess supernatural powers, called *siddhis* (Shattuck 1999: 112f.). These *siddhis* are, however, also postulated to reside in every individual and be of a subjective rather than objective and measurable nature by some spiritual traditions related to Hinduism (Stutley 1998: 90). In the late 1960s, when TM had already gathered a prominent group of followers, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's claim that his meditative practice could beget such *siddhis*, levitation in particular, attracted vast scepticism, especially considering his refusal to openly demonstrate these powers.<sup>8</sup> American TM centres provided courses promising the development of such levitating capabilities, which "created publicity that was often negative" and which were thus discontinued (Albanese 1992: 307). Nonetheless, the general pop-cultural resonance with South Asian religious signifiers was a positive one and the numbers of individuals engaging in some related practice allows the supposition that a general, if superficial, literacy in these religious concepts and practices must have been wide-spread among Americans in the late 1960s.

### **Grievances, frames, and ambivalences**

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#### *Racial discrimination*

A major grievance of the 1960s was related to socio-political and socio-economic inequalities on racial grounds. The injustice of racist discrimination and violence has often been identified to concentrate geographically first and foremost in the South, yet the urban centres of the North faced this problem, as well. Jim Crow, a legal and social system of racial segregation implemented after the Civil War and emancipation, impeded racial equality in the South and was active throughout the 1950s and early 1960s. This system approved the racial segregation of "everything from schools and buses to bathrooms, beaches, and drinking fountains" as well as the denial of constitutionally granted voting rights and the social sanctioning of "[d]aily humiliations" of people of colour (Patterson 1996: 381). While the passing of the Civil Rights Act in 1964 abolished this system officially, attitudes remained marked by its legacy. In the North, African Americans faced disadvantages in the workplace, as employers were less likely to hire them – a circumstance that led to significantly increased unemployment and poverty rates in this demographic (ibid.). As Lawrence Wittner notes, conditions of "poverty, unemployment, slum housing, poor education, and police brutality" were present in urban Black communities and sparked resistance to white mainstream



society, whose racial prejudice conditioned and perpetuated such circumstances (1978: 286).

The grievance of racial discrimination was not only perceived by those whom it victimised. As the activities and desegregated constituencies of organisations such as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and others show<sup>9</sup>, this type of discrimination was perceived as a grievance by what McCarthy and Zald would refer to as "conscience adherents" (1977: 1222), those subjects not directly impacted by the oppression targeted by resistance. Yet evaluating white, mostly middle-class youth that formed part of SNCC and CORE as not directly influenced by racial discrimination is not necessarily generally tenable, as its concomitant violence did affect whites from the middle of the 1960s onward: Police brutality against Black communities was prevalent in the North as well as in the South, and protests against this brutality gained visibility in 1964, when some northern urban centres became the sites of riots (Jenkins 2003: 265).

Some of the most notable uprisings took place in Los Angeles, where 34 lives were lost, in Newark, with a death toll of 26, and in Detroit, which saw the death of 43 people (ibid.). As Jenkins also states, there were riots in 75 cities in that same year of 1967 (ibid.: 265). DiBacco cites numbers suggesting that there were "more than 150 major urban riots in the years 1964-1968" (1991: 725). Wittner notes 164 such incidents for the year 1967 alone, reporting that Detroit suffered material damages worth 45 million dollars (1978: 286). It is important to note that more often than not, this violence hit "symbols of white authority in black neighbourhoods" rather than white individuals (ibid.). DiBacco also reflects on the behaviour of the media in its coverage of racial injustice, stating that the media focused on the protestors' acts of violence, failing to give an adequate picture of the continuous injustice that prevailed in the urban centres where there were Black communities (1991: 725). In light of the fact that few whites were actually harmed, this coverage betrays a keen anticipation of threat in the face of the incidences.

The increasing militancy of some African American protest groups further increased this anticipation. Some white citizens felt "shocked" by the outspoken adversity to whites professed by some of the divisions in the Black Panther movement (founded in 1966) (Jenkins 2003: 267f.). Other historians also use the noun "shock" to describe the reaction of white citizens when faced with the violent uprisings



against racial injustice in the cities (DiBacco 1991: 722). In this field of tension between activism to terminate racial injustice and the feelings of discomfort and threat in the face of the violence this injustice triggered in the affected communities, some countercultural white conscience adherents and constituents of the organisations favouring the Civil Rights Movement made use of the Hindu concept of karma.

### *Karma as a frame*

Karma, characteristic of mainly Hinduism, but also relevant in the contexts of Buddhism and Jainism (Becke 1996: 44), represents a major concept appropriated by the counterculture. It postulates that the deeds of present lifetimes determine the conditions of coming ones according to a moral code operating on the binary distinction between good and evil (ibid.: 45). Karma is thus most often described as a relentless law of causality (Ellinger 1989: 17). It is argued here that karma plays a chief role in constructing and framing the principles of causality regarding racial inequality and the upsurge of racial violence in the 1960s. In this manner, a master frame of 'responsibility' connected to the specific karma frame comes into existence.

Vocabularies of bewilderment have pervaded the discourse of racial conflict in white media and white Christian discourse since the 1950s<sup>10</sup>, presenting this conflict as a matter intrinsically hard to understand. This representation can be read as an essential part and telling sign of a privileged position, in which a presumed ignorance shields the privileged of an awareness of personal implication and responsibility regarding the oppressive structures—a mechanism that Critical Whiteness Studies scholar Aretha Schwarzbach-Apithy would call "[d]as Privileg der Unkenntnis" (2005: 248). A privileged ignorance of the causalities leading to the violent protests can be understood as one such mechanism of a perpetuation of oppression. In this instant, a discourse stemming from the concept of karma has the potential of calling to mind the historical and social causalities that lead to the violence faced by the Black and witnessed by the white populations of the cities.

An example of this use of a transcendent narrative of cause and effect as enabled by the concept of karma is found in one of New York City's underground press magazines of the late 1960s, the *East Village Other*.<sup>11</sup> This magazine was independently produced and distributed by a loosely organised group of individuals known as the *Yippies*, who identified with the causes of the counterculture and the New Left. One



contributor to the magazine, Elfrida Rivers, interprets the problems of racism in the USA as follows in an esoteric column that engages directly the questions of readers sent to the magazine:

Current Black violence – here and in Africa – is probably descending upon the white races because of their historical position; the American settlers in particular incurred a frightful racial karma in committing what amounted to genocide upon the Indians. (Rivers 1969: 20)

This quote renders visible both progressive statements and conservative omissions that characterise the use of South Asian religious concepts. The establishment of connections between the colonial history of the USA, the race violence of the 1960s, and the anti-colonial struggle in Africa can be evaluated as comparatively progressive and accurate. Historians and social activists would generally agree on the relatedness of the struggles to fight what can be interpreted as internal colonisation of oppressed minorities (e. g. Gutiérrez 2004) and the larger battle against the imperialist colonisation rooted in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Black activists of the 1960s like Eldridge Cleaver also identified this connection and called for the liberation of "black colonial subjects who are held in bondage" discussing the situation of African Americans in the US (1995: 171).

Here, the concept of karma functions as a discursive tool that enables these relations to be explicitly stated without resorting to contested political vocabularies. On account of its pop-cultural valorisation the concept of karma can now serve to establish a connecting frame between two social movements, namely the one "set of [...] various spokespersons" (cf. Tilly 1978: 12) opposing racial discrimination within the US, and the other set that formulates as its major grievance the ongoing colonisation of African countries. At the same time, the reference to "American settlers" activates the discourse of American Indian rights, likewise addressed by social movements in the 1960s and 1970s. Alluding to the evictions and murders of the colonial era, the quoted text establishes a causal connection between race violence in the 1960s and the history of race violence in colonial America. Using the concept of karma in that manner, the text represents racial violence as an overarching nexus causative of grievances that not only affect one minority group, but several, and that have potential consequences for whites.



A mentioned characteristic is the seemingly apolitical vocabulary with which the socio-political issue is addressed, potentially expanding the reach of the frame thus constructed. As stated, the privileged often refuse, consciously or not, to recognise their implication into processes and practices of oppression. Hence, the use of a religious and pop-culturally valorised concept can be conducive to a frame's expansion, designing a discursive structure that less drastically discloses the personal political implication of the privileged individual into oppressive socio-political formations (c.f. McCarthy & Zald 1977: 1225). A frame avoidant of political vocabularies that directly impeach privilege and its fundamental role in perpetuating oppression is better able to mobilise these privileged subjects to join or view favourably the political cause in question. In this manner, the master frame of 'responsibility' does not appear to indict specific individuals, but elucidates the causality of oppression and resistance on the basis of historical developments removed from individual experience. However, this very tactic of depoliticising the political is one of many ambivalent traits of karma as a frame.

#### *The ambivalence of karma as a frame*

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The avoidance of political vocabularies can prove a problematic omission, catering to an indiscriminate wish to assert privilege through the appropriation of both, non-Western religious concepts and the discourses of agency that are required to subvert the infrastructures of oppression. The fact "that some hippies rejected the very idea that they *should* be politically active" (Issitt 2009: 47) is treated as common knowledge by scholars, who cast many countercultural groups as fundamentally sceptical of politics generally and therefore intentionally apolitical. This attitude implies that rather than a serious socio-political endeavour, the struggle against oppression becomes a lifestyle, of which the use of non-Western religious practices and anti-establishment political attitudes are part. This position, however, in its lack of intellectual and political rigor, asserts rather than questions one's own privilege, particularly the abovementioned privilege of ignorance. This effect can be read to point to a general problem occurring with practices and processes of frame bridging and the mobilisation of conscience constituents: While the expansion of concepts and the use of pop-culturally valorised signifiers are useful to mobilise conscience adherents, they can also signify a performance of the privilege already established in society.



While the concept of karma allows for a discussion of the historical connections in the practices and effects of racism, it also allows for an implicit discursive perpetuation of the very same racism. This argument echoes the Weberian analysis of this concept's use in legitimising inequality in the form of the caste system in Hindu socio-cultural contexts (cf. Milner 1993: 299). Particularly problematic is the location of both, cause and effect of racist violence in those subjected to it. The column states that there is a reason why minorities are discriminated against, and this reason has been, according to the author, largely brought about by the minorities themselves, albeit in previous lives (cf. Rivers 1969: 8, 20).

In a mixture of Hindu and Christian terminologies, the author maintains that experiencing violence was necessary to effectuate atonement for sins committed in previous existences. This turn of argument evaluates the discrimination and violence against minorities as potentially positive acts from which victims will reap benefits in the form of forgiveness for crimes allegedly committed by them collectively throughout history. The description of this process implies that the crimes committed against minorities at the time of writing are justified and serve a noble purpose, even if that purpose will not unfold its effect in the lifetime of the generation in question. To put it more poignantly, violence is depicted as a spiritual favour and occurrences of discrimination follow, in effect, a specifically traceable logic in a correct order of historical events and spiritual as well as moral imperatives.

The suggestion that violence and discrimination serve the eventual good of minorities, of course, fits into a colonialist and paternalistic argument. The legal philosophy of paternalism was developed in the South in the 1840s as a response to abolitionist and economic pressures from the North (cf. Oakes 2010; Cottrol 1987). James Oakes identifies a "racialized ethic of 'Christian stewardship' whereby whites would accept their responsibility for the care and feeding of their inherently inferior slaves" (2010: 589) as the main element of southern paternalism and further states that "racial paternalism was closely related to the most dehumanizing elements of proslavery rhetoric" (ibid.: 590). Robert J. Cottrol also references the binary of "black dependence" and "white responsibility" (1987: 366) as the main structuring element of the "set of apologetics" (ibid.: 365) which he identifies paternalism to be. The actual goal of the implementation of paternalism in white Southern culture was to dictate a particular code of behaviour to slave owners, preventing them from using violence and thus "reducing the slaves' incentives to rebel", whereby it was ulti-



mately a measure of "slave control" (Oakes 2010: 589). In the case of the use of the concept of karma in the *East Village Other*, structural similarities with the tenets of paternalism are evident. The part of the responsible parent is implied to have been transferred, by virtue of elusive metaphysical laws, on the hegemonic oppressors in all of the major conflicts and atrocities of the twentieth century (cf. Rivers 1969: 8, 20).

Yet there also seems to be an unexpected conclusion when the column states that violent protests undertaken by African Americans are a punishment for past crimes committed by whites. This seems to represent an inversion of the paternalistic scheme with its initial distribution of roles along the binary of "dependency" vs. "responsibility". In this case, as mentioned, paternal agency seems to have been transferred to those whom it has been historically denied. However, this superficially transformational conclusion has limits that emerge as soon as one applies the concept of karma stringently. After all, this discourse implicitly equips one to argue that the discrimination faced by African Americans in the 1960s, the original grievance preceding the violent protests, is the continuation of a type of deserved punishment administered by the white oppressors, who are then once again elevated to the status of educators. Protestors resisting oppression are then once again reduced to the level of ignorance and dependence. Since this particular use of the concept of karma implies a specific guilt on the part of the past generations of those faced with violence now, it considerably limits the justification of protest or even self-defence against the violence experienced. Resistance is thus implicitly understood as counterproductive, as it stems from the alleged ignorance of the spiritual mechanisms at work. Here, the functional homology of the concept of karma as a simplifying frame and the philosophy of paternalism grow visible, as both betray a keen interest in controlling oppressed populations. In a move of discursive intimidation, karma as frame for racial discrimination induces the speaker employing it to ambivalently turn against the group with which she professes to side.

### *The rigidity of social roles and family structures*

The 1950s are stereotypically seen as a time in which the nuclear family gained paramount cultural importance in the US, imposing strict gender-based social roles and behavioural patterns on individuals. The traditional expectations that middle-class individuals were to meet in the 1950s and still in the 1960s were especially limiting for many



women. The normativised role of females in a white middle-class setting was that of mothers and wives confined to the private space of the home, more specifically the suburban house, while the role of males seemed to comprise little more than that of breadwinners (cf. Friedan 1963: 16). According to John Robert Greene's overview of 1960s society, the Commission on the Status of Women, brought into existence by John F. Kennedy in 1961, failed to act in accordance with its professed objective of improving the situation of women, suggesting instead that plans upholding conservative gender roles should be financed (2010: 111).

In starkest contrast to this recommendation, the activists and adherents of the Women's Liberation movement called for a radical questioning of such traditional gender roles (ibid.: 115). Especially in the light of post-war social developments that seemed to curtail freedoms achieved during the Great Depression and World War II, such a mobilisation seemed necessary. One example is the issue of what James T. Patterson calls "sex-segregated employment", which significantly increased after the war, leading to three-fourths of all American working women being employed in "female-only jobs" after the 1950s (1996: 33). This circumstance leads Patterson to note that "[g]ender segregation at work was by then greater than in 1900 and sharper than segregation by race" (ibid.).

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As Patterson further points out, the spheres of political activism were no less contaminated with gender-bias than was the mainstream. In various social movements during the late 1960s, women's roles remained limited to the chiefly domestic tasks of taking care of catering and cleaning, while oftentimes being confronted with sexist harassments and not receiving appropriate representation in decision-making bodies (Patterson 1996: 645). This discrepancy led many female activists to organise groups of their own dedicated specifically to the cause of Women's Liberation, contending for "reproductive freedom, the legalization of abortion, changes in family dynamics, and [...] lesbian rights" as well as equal pay for equal work (ibid.: 646).

Yet not only women felt limited by the institutions of capitalist patriarchy during the 1960s. Texts by male writers of that and earlier periods suggest that privileged roles for men as providers and patriarchal leaders were also restrictive, exploitative, and at odds with personal conceptions of a worthwhile existence. Narratives of escape and alternative lifestyles by authors of the Beat Generation, such as Willaim S. Burroughs and Jack Kerouac, point to this discontent: Their



male characters often thwart social norms, engage in forms of sexuality unacceptable to their conservative contemporaries, reject their insertion into the capitalist marketplace, and experiment with drugs (*On the Road, Naked Lunch*). Ken Kesey as the most recognised representative of countercultural fiction (Oliver 2014: 74) took up most of these themes. The fact that his best-known character, McMurphy, is confined to a mental asylum and, along with his all-male fellow inmates, is systematically abused by Ms. Ratched, the head nurse (*One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*), indicates that the privilege of masculinity was not unequivocally synonymous with power and security from oppression in the 1960s.

In this socio-cultural tension, Greene locates the emergence of the hippie movement. Quoting from 1960s activist Guy Strait, Greene defines a hippie as an individual who negates social demands such as "traditional fashion trends; the desire to make money and to own property; the need to keep up with the middle-class Joneses" (2010: 140). Greene asserts that the communal lifestyle was one of the most vital traits of the counterculture because it fortified this negation by deviating from prevalent individualist and consumerist social norms, providing refuge from the perceived "dehumanization" of a society that extolled "mechanical standards of efficiency" (ibid.: 141). The next sections elucidate how the commune became a vital countercultural frame, helping to protest the limitations of a conservative mainstream, while also structurally reproducing its biases.

### *The commune as a frame*

Religious communities that gather in order to worship form an intrinsic part of different South Asian religious expressions (Ellinger 1989: 103). Hindi religious piety has often been experienced in ascetic and monastic groups that assemble outside of traditional communities in order to escape the implications of the secular world (Stietencron 2001: 35f.). These characteristics also apply to ISKCON, whose members adhere to a communal lifestyle devoted to their religious practices. As E. Burke Rochford's qualitative study of participants in ISKCON shows, in the 1970s attachments to family members were discouraged and participants were called to identify with the religious movement instead. Also, ISKCON propagated asceticism, vegetarianism, and devotion to the eponymous deity; furthermore, the "chanting of the Hare Krishna mantra" formed part of this religious community's devotional practices (2007: 21, 3).



Communal lifestyles as popularised by these organisations provided an example of how to practically contradict conservative social structures. Greene points out that the 1960s produced over 2,000 rural and 5,000 urban communes, also stating that over two million Americans participated in communal lifestyles (2010: 141). Naturally, these communes were not all devoted to the religious practices proposed by the mentioned religious sects, but were mostly experimenting with different forms of social organisation beyond the patriarchal and heteronormative mandates of the decade (*ibid.*). The best-known and largest communes were of an agricultural character, requiring participants to engage in some form of husbandry and food production, encouraging a "Back to the Land" attitude and taking interest in environmentalist causes: Vegetarianism, sharing, and avoiding excess in the accumulation of personal goods was encouraged in most communes (Issitt 2009: 50, 52-4).

According to Rochford, "two-thirds of the devotees who had joined ISKCON between 1967 and 1971 had previously participated in the counterculture", and "[o]ver half of the early converts to Krishna had taken part in the anti-war movement" (1991: 66). This data shows that the communal practices proposed by these religious organisations resonated with the sentiments of a mobilised demographic that identified with the manifold grievances represented in the loose formations of the counterculture, specifically sympathising with the anti-war movement. This fact suggests that ISKCON's communal aspect, among other elements, appealed to a large variety of countercultural subjects and their respective grievances (*cf.* Kniss & Vande Berg 2008: 90). ISKCON's countercultural appeal implies that the discourses of community were adequate tools in mobilising adherents of different protest groups, thus functioning as a frame bridging device across social movements and their adherents (Benford & Snow 2000: 624). The master frame thus constructed can be called 'alternative/ independent community'.

Oliver shares this rather general observation, stating that "[c]ommunes offered the possibility of a simpler, non-exploitative lifestyle which appeared to link well with the other values of the counterculture" (2014: 106). This observation of a general compatibility between the counterculture and a communal lifestyle can be further differentiated. As mentioned before, ISKCON clearly discouraged its members from marriage and sexuality; existing families were often separated, the children taken care of in the organisation's boarding schools while the parents devoted themselves to the community



(Rochford 2007: 8). This points to the commune's suitability to provide a frame directed against conservative social roles and family values.

Two other relevant political grievances concern modes of work and environmental protection. Instead of inserting themselves into capitalist processes of production that divide the worker from decision-making processes, the communards endeavoured to be self-sufficient and independent farmers. Their food choices and their modes of working the land exhibited environmentalist enthusiasm absent from industrialised, capitalist society. The weakening of rigid social roles was in that manner linked with opposition to capitalism and environmental pollution. Thus, the commune operated as a framing bridge between the ideologically related interests of countering gender-based social roles, resisting capitalism, and endorsing environmentalism. At the same time, Rochford's research suggests a strong affiliation with the cause of opposing militarism.

Communal living mobilised beneficiaries, who temporarily escaped the structures of a patriarchal, heteronormative, capitalist society. Again, this particular instance of the use of a religious practice also appears to be conspicuously apolitical and rooted in a pop-cultural infatuation with alternative lifestyles rather than the felt need for political protest. Nonetheless, the evident political activism of a significant part of the participants of some of the religious communities suggests that the frame of the commune can serve as a frame bridging device between different social and political interest groups.

### *The ambivalence of the commune as a frame*

Historians often represent countercultural communes as egalitarian, emphasising their critical stance towards traditional notions of family life, their liberating attitudes towards sexuality, and their absolute rejection of the militarism that forcefully imposed itself on society on account of the Vietnam War. Individual experiences in countercultural communes, however, differed from these representations. One instance of recorded memories of daily life in a commune is the blog *Growing up on a Hippie Commune* that features the childhood recollections of Celeste, who grew up on one of the largest communes in the USA called "The Farm".

In the case of this not primarily religious commune, located in rural Tennessee and lasting into the 1980s, the material living conditions were reminiscent of a military camp in the wilderness. As Celeste describes in the *About* section of her blog entitled "I grew up on a



hippy commune", the housing used by the communards comprised army camp tents and old busses on a piece of land removed from other settlements or cities; communication with society outside the commune was strictly monitored and generally disapproved; food was rationed and food choices depended on practicability and functionality rather than on preference or taste.<sup>12</sup>

Differences in accommodational arrangements also feature prominently in Celeste's descriptions of her earliest childhood memories: As the account in a post called "My First Memory" intimates, accommodation, which featured only one single house on the territory of the commune during the first years, induced doubts regarding equality and hierarchy on the part of the child:

I stared at the house wishing and wondering what it'd be like to live in one and sleep in a real bed. I had been inside before and could picture the tiny dark hallway with no windows where several bunkbeds were piled together lining both sides of the walls. Those children were so special to live in a house and sleep in those beds. How I longed to be special too.

I played alone in the sandbox while the house kids ran in and out and around the house playing their games. I was different. I lived in a tent. When it was warm we'd roll up the tent walls. My mother seemed to be very happy with our tent...but oh how I fantasized about those real beds.<sup>13</sup>

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While the writer does not provide information concerning the criteria that determined the accommodation of specific people, and while the circumstances of dwelling in a tent seem to have been endured voluntarily by the writer's mother, the main emotional response elicited in the writer is one of lack and deprivation, coupled with concerns regarding one's position in the group hierarchy. This accommodational differentiation and its concomitant function as a hierarchical marker are particularly reminiscent of military practice, regarding both, material arrangements and ideology.<sup>14</sup> While Celeste's commune did not seem to arrange accommodational privileges in a deliberate manner, the disparity in this allocation still produced a sharp awareness of inequality in the child and sparked musings as to this disparity's justification, which manifested themselves in the description of the privileged with the adjective of "special" in contrast to a self-description as "different".

Religious communities paralleled the structure of military living conditions in more pronounced ways, which grows clear considering



the following summary of the Hare Krishna house commune in San Francisco by W. J. Rorabaugh:

Some houses were overtly religious, such as those established by the Hare Krishna followers. The leader, A. C. Bhaktivedanta, opposed drugs. "You don't have to take anything for your spiritual life," he advised. Each member had a shaved head, wore a saffron robe, performed chants frequently, and sold literature or begged for alms on nearby sidewalks. More than fifty young people, mostly males, crammed into the Hare Krishna house in Berkeley. They lived on a vegetarian diet that ran heavily on brown rice. It was suspected that some of them were either draft dodgers or runaway soldiers. They took Krishna names and denied to police having prior identities. As monks, they were not eligible for the draft. (2015: 172)

Especially the phenomenon of "draft dodgers" seeking refuge in the Hare Krishna community elucidates the paradox resulting from the interplay between the avowed goal of choosing this communal lifestyle, namely to evade the military, and this lifestyle's day to day reality. This paradox is particularly visible when identifying the structural similarities between the communal lifestyle's disciplines and the disciplines of military life: The prohibition of drugs, the shaving of the head, the wearing of uniform garments, the participation in mandatory activities to ensure the ideological reproduction of the group, the regimentation of eating habits and food choices, the homosocial living environment, the lack of privacy in overly crowded facilities, and the momentary denial of one's own identity in favour of a group identity all apply to both, the Hare Krishna community in Berkeley and to common military practices. Under these circumstances, the draft dodgers' decision to join the commune in order to escape the military seems highly paradoxical, if not ironic, when one takes into account the structural similarities between the military and the communal lifestyles.

Furthermore, the reasons for the frugal food choices were not merely symbolic assertions of group identity and delimitations from outside society, establishing difference between the undisciplined bodies of the mainstream and their disciplined communal counterparts; they were primarily dictated by economic conditions (ibid. 2015: 175). This rather commonplace practice of allowing scarcity of means to discipline one's habits is, however, vested in a spiritual and oppositional code. In other words, the processes by which the body is made "docile" as well as subject to surveillance and which according to Michel Foucault are the mainstay of coercive governmental institutions



(1995: 136f.) are thus incurred voluntarily by the communards and under the pretence of resistance.

This similarity to hegemonic notions of useful bodily disciplines also perpetuates itself in the enforcement of parental authority. In contrast to common representations of communal life, a conservative notion of parental authority enforced by corporal punishment survived even among the hippies, as Celeste emotively recalls her misgivings regarding the consequences of eating cat food with other children: "I hate getting in trouble, I hate getting spanked. I try very hard to be a good kid, so I don't risk things like sneaking cat food myself. I kind of wish I had the nerve to be so bad, but I don't".<sup>15</sup> The fact that "spanking" was present in Celeste's experience for something relatively trite, in spite of the fact that her mother was strongly devoted to the ideals of the commune, points to the perseverance of coercive approaches to child rearing in the communes.

The issue of sanctioned violence against children in spiritual communes during the late 1960s and throughout the following decade has been sufficiently exposed to further belie the representation of the commune as unambiguously liberating. Rochford maintains that the exact number of children who suffered from criminal abuse in ISKCON's boarding schools cannot be determined with precision, but still adduces data suggesting that one-fourth to three-fourths of the children faced some degree of abuse (2007: 75). According to Nori J. Muster, the 1970s and 1980s saw around 800 children subjected to "criminal neglect, emotional, physical, or sexual abuse" while accommodated at ISKCON.<sup>16</sup> The scale of the abuse indicates that these communal living arrangements, separating children from parents, escalated the disparity of power always already existing between adults and children, instead of ameliorating it by instituting more egalitarian relations between generations. Furthermore, the structural similarities to the exposed cases of child abuse in mainstream Christian boarding schools grows apparent in this instance and once again points to the fundamental ambivalence of the frame of the commune.

### *The media and the Vietnam War*

The countercultural discontent with the media's positioning was particularly acute when coverage of the Vietnam War and of demonstrations was concerned. The 1968 incident of My Lai is often evaluated as one of the gravest failures of the media occurring during the war. My



Lai, a Vietnamese village of innocent people thought by the American military to harbour Viet Cong combatants, was attacked by American soldiers, leaving several hundred people dead (Greene 2010: 128). The military could cover up the event for over a year before the accurate information was retrieved by the press and made public. This occurrence is but one instance that gave rise to the particular grievance of media distrust among countercultural individuals and encouraged forms of protest reflecting it.

While some historians give individual journalists of that era credit in the matter of My Lai for critically evaluating military records and eventually overcoming the obfuscation tactics employed by the military (ibid.: 131), war coverage generally betrayed hegemonic allegiances. In his analysis of artists' responses to incidents such as My Lai, Francis Frascina offers a detailed overview of the general attitude prevalent in late 1960s media. He points out that already the Tet Offensive of early 1968 effectuated an increasingly "critical edge" in news coverage (Frascina 1995: 494). This "critical edge", however, did not last long enough to render the media truly autonomous in relation to the government, as it continued to count on White House data and to uphold "the line of official optimism" regarding the war (ibid.; also Hallin 1984: 6). Frascina evaluates this dependence as "a form of self-censorship which replicated and colluded with the political 'establishment'" (1995: 494).

Media adherence to the government's narrative also crystallised in the coverage of anti-war protests. 50,000 to 150,000 people attended the March on the Pentagon in 1967; the higher number is provided by the organisers of the protest, while the government's estimates are considerably lower (Lytle 2006: 243). In the course of the demonstration, clashes between the activists and the police occurred. The media supported mostly those in power and blamed the demonstrators for the escalation, with reports being "almost vicious in denouncing the protestors" (ibid.). The selective representation of the events failed to reflect the reality of police brutality that the protestors faced; it also failed to engage objectively with the protestors' reasons of criticising the war, retaining a bias favouring the government and supporting a conservative view on cultural contention (ibid.: 245).

Instead of reporting objectively, the media were generally perceived to criminalise the activists. Frascina cites several instances of reporting that established discursive connections between famous criminals and the counterculture. For example, he adduces *The New York Times'*



coverage of the murders carried out by the group around Charles Manson, repeatedly referring to the murderers as "hippies". The formation of such a discursive link that sought to criminalise opposition to the executive's policies formed part of a government strategy, which the press incorporated into its style of reporting (Frascina 1995: 502f.). The media thus enhanced the government's efforts to delegitimise protest against its policies. However, there were activists who used specific strategies to make the media, albeit unwittingly, complicit in advertising the social movements involved in demonstrations.

### *Spectacle as a frame*

An important element of South Asian religious practices is the staging of religious ceremonies, often perceived as spectacles by foreign onlookers. While not exclusive to the realm of South Asian religious practice, it is one of the most widely perceived elements of both TM as well as of ISKCON, who until today incorporate both chanting and staging their worship into their religious practices and display these publically. It was the March on the Pentagon which contained a notable use of South Asian religious signifiers to stage a protest against the Vietnam War. March participant Jo Freeman reports, "[a]t the other end a group of hippies was trying to exorcize the Pentagon. The brainchild of Abbie Hoffman, the plan was for people to sing and chant until it levitated and turned orange, driving out the evil spirits and ending the war in Viet Nam. The Pentagon didn't move".<sup>17</sup>

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It is of interest that the diverse array of groups and movements present in the march contained a fraction of ISKCON adherents, who together with participants of the Women's Liberation Movement, the Yippies, and the adherents of other movements participated in a protest event staged as the "Levitation of the Pentagon" (cf. Windt 1990: 233). This participation, together with the theme of the spectacle, shows that the resonance of the religious concepts referenced was sufficiently wide to be employed in a setting in which diverse interest groups and activists converged. Levitation, as the most notable signifier invoked by the Yippies, is one of the *siddhis* that proponents of TM claimed to be linked to their meditative practice.

This instance of the Yippies' "guerrilla theater" was utilised "to con the media into advertising the cultural politics of the hippie and New Left" communities (Lytle 2006: 243). Focusing on the Yippies' main organiser, Abbie Hoffman, Nadine Bloch provides this favourable account of their use of spectacle as a means of criticising the media,



while at the same time employing the media to proliferate counter-cultural ideas:

Abbie Hoffman was an astute observer of the media, which helped him create events that the media would love. There had to be conflict, chaos and challenges to the status quo, and there had to be music, costumes and other trappings of the counterculture to stand in contrast with everything else. The exorcism and levitation of the Pentagon was a direct reaction to the manipulation of the news about the Vietnam War, which seemed like so much smoke and mirrors to those opposed to the war. Fighting such absurdity with anything short of the same seemed counterproductive and insignificant, because the mass media was so good at its war-mongering job.<sup>18</sup>

Bloch's account of the theatrical character of Hoffman's events accurately takes into consideration the general opinion on the dubious interrelations of the media and the administration responsible for the war. Her description also explicates the mechanism by which the employed religious signifiers not only function to bridge frames between different social movements and interest groups, but also to reflect incredulity towards the official narratives, which are implicitly equated with the Yippies' exaggerated, spectacular shows. In this manner, the act of staging a spectacle using religious signifiers is productive of another discourse, namely that of deceit and lack of trustworthiness.

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This discourse is indicative on its part of a significant grievance, which can be described as an absence of trust into the media and official news. As a hegemonic conditioning device, the media was targeted by many oppositional groups who saw themselves misrepresented by the same. While this issue was most pertinent to the anti-war movement, which decried the media's complicity with the government to justify military action in Vietnam, the point of contact with movements such as Women's Liberation and Civil Rights in expressing discontent with the media is evident. In the case of Hoffman's use of spectacle, the master frame implicitly constructed through the exaggerated and mocking use of South Asian religious practices and signifiers can be formulated as 'distrust', which conceptually united the social activists present at the march.

#### *The ambivalence of spectacle as a frame*

Regarding the practice of adopting highly visible and carnivalesque forms of protest, one cannot fail to notice the colonialist import of



using the mentioned set of religious signifiers. After all, the culmination of the March on the Pentagon was the spectacular levitation ceremony. Levitation, as explained, is a feature of one of the most cliché-ridden representations of Hindu ascetics. One could note that the countercultural agents engaged in these enactments of protest experienced their agency chiefly by virtue of the process of cultural appropriation and commodification in relation to an implicitly defined Other. In this act of cultural appropriation the protesters invigorated a hegemonic construction of a totalised, stereotypical "Orient" that heavily relied on colonialist discourses of the carnivalesque, of alleged Oriental disorder, and of indolent spirituality.

This particular instance of the appropriation of various non-Judeo-Christian religious signifiers by the Yippies resembles practices of celebrating carnivals and masquerading in eighteenth-century England. Writing about the concept and practice of the carnivalesque in English literature and culture of that period, Terry Castle notes optimistically:

Granted, one might see in foreign costume a mere displacement of imperialist fantasy; the popularity of the masquerade coincided after all with the expansion of British imperialism, and the symbolic joining of races could conceivably be construed as a kind of perverse allusion to empire. Yet at a deeper level, such travesties were also an act of homage – to otherness itself [...]. Stereotypical and inaccurate [sic!] though they often were, exotic costumes marked out a kind of symbolic interpenetration with difference – an almost erotic commingling with the alien. Mimicry became a form of psychological recognition, a way of embracing, quite literally, the unfamiliar. The collective result was a utopian projection; the masquerade's visionary "Congress of Nations" – the image of global conviviality [...] (1986: 61f.)

Judging from the self-representation of the Yippies, their carnivalesque use of South Asian religious signifiers can be read to constitute an "homage" of sorts, albeit one within the context of a heavily imbalanced power structure that grew out of a history of colonialism. This imbalance may impede the description of the processes as "homage" in both situations, for that term seems to euphemise the very "perverse allusion to empire" and appropriation present in both events. Even the metaphoric "Congress of Nations" that Castle sees in the embodiment of orientalist stereotypes by Westerners seems pertinent when drawing parallels to the Yippies: The political cause of the opposition to the war in Vietnam certainly called for international dialogue in a democratic setting that the term of a "Congress of Nations" seems to imply.



Yet the problem with this "utopian projection" of a "global conviviality" is its very ambiguity: While the image of a world in which all nations share amicable relations is certainly stereotypically utopian, the very act of the masquerade implies that such a normative utopia can best be achieved when it is the Westerner's voice that assumes the Other's place inside the costumes the Other is imagined to wear and in the religious rituals the Other is imagined to perform. In conclusion, a retaining of the Other's form with the simultaneous eviction of its voice seems to lie at the heart of both spectacles, while both uphold the stereotype of the "Oriental masquerade" (Said 1979: 160) as a structuring element.

Especially the emphasis on the spectacular warrants an analysis of the orientalisation performed in those events. The use of South Asian religious signifiers in the staging of spectacular protest affirms an alleged bond between South Asian religious practices and the characteristic of the spectacular, the opulent, and the excessive. As Edward Said remarks, "[b]ecause it is made into a general object, the whole Orient can be made to serve as an illustration of a particular form of eccentricity"; therefore "[t]he Orient is watched, since its almost (but never quite) offensive behaviour issues out of a reservoir of infinite peculiarity [...]" (ibid.: 102). Eccentricity and peculiarity are the main elements on which the Yippies rely enlisting their construction of non-Judeo-Christian signifiers to stage their protest. As mentioned, their effectiveness in evoking significant resonance with decision makers remained negligible, wherefore the main message of the protest remained its spectacular form, once again actualising the mainstream's gaze on a sight of frivolous eccentricity, peculiarity, and "oddness" (ibid.) that expresses itself, at least partly, in terms of South Asian religious signifiers. Thus, it is fair to allege that countercultural groups utilised and exploited South Asian religious signifiers and religious practices in order to shape a form of carnivalesque entertainment that posed as a bottom-up intervention into politics in order to valorise itself, simultaneously intensifying activated stereotypes.

Also, the usage of South Asian religious signifiers specifically to vent desires to participate in spectacular forms of protest strengthens the stereotypical link of the "Orient" with religion generally and reflects back on the perception of South Asian cultural and religious contexts: The deep-set association of South Asia with religion and excessive, spectacular religious practices, active in Western societies until today, is in part perpetuated on the basis of such pop-cultural links when the



public absorbs little other information about those non-Western cultures. Said identifies a "nineteenth-century tradition of the Orient as therapeutic for the West" that also constructs this space as a sight of a restoration of a lost Western sense of spirituality (ibid.: 271). The use of South Asian religious signifiers for a staged protest recreates the essentially colonial image of South Asia as a sphere mainly defined by spiritual concerns and by spectacular forms of religious expression foreign to the ostensibly rational Westerner divorced from his spirituality.

Especially Bloch's interpretation of the use of religious signifiers to reflect the forms of deceit used by the media intimates that the evident de-valorisation of these religious practices and signifiers is problematic. To echo Said, the use of South Asian religious signifiers becomes part of a discursive practice of Orientalism in which the essentially untrustworthy and dubious is determined to proceed from an imagined space referred to as "the Orient", to which South Asia also belongs. Said's reformulation of an eighteenth-century source comes to mind: "Orientals are inveterate liars, they are 'lethargic and suspicious', and in everything oppose the clarity, directness, and nobility of the Anglo-Saxon race" (ibid.: 39). Here, the fundamental ambivalence of the use of South-Asian religious signifiers is reiterated and its hegemonic potential actualised.

The use of South Asian religious signifiers to protest the war specifically points to another aspect that is germane to all of the grievances analysed: The conservation and performance of privilege must not be viewed as an altogether condemnable act that renders the political message of the counterculture void of meaning, automatically disproving any sincerity of purpose when it comes to transformative politics. Much rather, this insistence on retaining privilege and marking it visibly for the mainstream to perceive exemplifies that privileged individuals are also bound by significant coercions, and that privilege does not only limit those at whose expense it is actualised. In other words, allying oneself with those that were denied privilege, by supporting their political causes and thereby questioning the system of privilege allocation, could have lethal consequences. The cases of the sometimes deadly struggles of civil rights activists in the South (Lytle 2006: 158-60), of students killed in campus protests (Dippel 1996: 122), etc. bear witness to that fact.



## Conclusion

As shown, South Asian religious signifiers worked as powerful counter-cultural frames expressing dissent with hegemonic views and policies as well as bridging the issues of different countercultural activist groups. At the same time, these frames were ambivalent, implicitly resonating with what Stuart Hall would term a "dominant cultural order" (Hall 1993: 98). In this manner, the religious concept of karma could be used to express opposition to racism, and at the same time activate paternalistic vocabularies and discursively intimidate violent protestors. By the same token, the religious practice of communal living could provide an escape from the rigid, gender-based social roles enforced by a system of patriarchal capitalism, but simultaneously create structures that perpetuate the very same imbalances of power that determined the mainstream. And correspondingly, the practice of the religious spectacle could decry the media's conservative bias, while it was also itself reproducing Orientalist biases and hegemonic notions of Western superiority.

As pointed out in the last section, this ambivalence was not merely a cause in itself, but can be explained regarding the hostility toward resistance, which during the decades in question could have dire consequences for overtly oppositional dissenters. Nonetheless, the appropriation of South Asian religious signifiers in order to navigate such difficult circumstances remains problematic, especially since many of these frames, reduced to stereotypes, remain in operation until today in pop-cultural discourses. Throughout this essay, the understanding of the ambivalent frame, fostered by the conceptual merger of Frame Theory and Cultural-Studies-based approaches to coding processes, has proved helpful in tracing this tension.

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## Endnotes

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<sup>2</sup> Singh, Sam. 2011. Hare Krishna: The Rise in Krishna Consciousness. *Huffingtonpost*, 20 Sep., [http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/sam-singh/hare-krishna-rise-in-krishna-consciousness\\_b\\_954954.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/sam-singh/hare-krishna-rise-in-krishna-consciousness_b_954954.html) [retrieved 27.03.15].

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Woo, Elaine. 2008. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi; Founded Transcendental Meditation Movement. *LA Times*, 06 Feb., <http://www.latimes.com/news/la-me-maharishi6feb06-story.html> [27.03.2015].

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*



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<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Woo, Elaine. 2008. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi; Founded Transcendental Meditation Movement. *LA Times*, 06 Feb.,  
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<sup>10</sup> E. g. Graham, Billy. 1958. What's Wrong with the World? (1958) by Dr. Billy Graham. *YouTube*, 28 Jun. 2011,  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fk63aANI2w0> [retrieved 27.03.2015].

<sup>11</sup> From Germany, access to EVO and other underground press and commune archives in the US is limited to those documents digitised and made available online, which significantly circumscribes the quantity of obtainable and adequate primary texts for analysis. While the exclusive concentration on Rivers in this section is primarily rooted in the close reading approach and in the exemplary development of the 'ambivalent frame' concept, it is also dictated by the scarcity of suitable primary sources available.

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<sup>12</sup> Celeste. 2012-2016. I grew up on a hippy commune. *Growing up on a Hippy Commune*.  
<https://hippycommune.wordpress.com/about/> [retrieved 06.01.2017].

<sup>13</sup> Celeste. 2012-2016. My first memory. *Growing up on a Hippy Commune*.  
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<sup>14</sup> Living on Base. N. d. *Military*,  
<http://www.military.com/money/pcs-dity-move/living-on-base.html> [retrieved 06.01.2017].

<sup>15</sup> Celeste. 2012-2016. Cat food king. *Growing up on a Hippy Commune*.  
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<sup>17</sup> Freeman, Jo. N. d. Levitate the Pentagon (1967). *JoFreeman.com*,  
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