

# The 1960s, Rock and Youth Culture and The Beatles

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- Emergence and economic importance of youth culture
  - Youth consumers have a sense of being part of a common audience that is new and distinct
  - The sociology of rock is inseparable from the sociology of youth
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# Rock in relation to Pop

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- Rock as music produced commercially for simultaneous consumption by a mass youth market.
  - Rock in contrast to pop carries intimations of sincerity, authority, even of art: i.e. non-commercial concerns.
  - Rock is mass produced music that carries a critique of production – mass consumed music that constructs its own authenticity.
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# Roots of Rock

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- Song form that makes its point musically and not in the lyrics.
  - Areas of influence:
    - 1. Black music of America in the 50s – blues, r&b. The Elvis connection bringing to a white audience music that had its roots in black music.
    - 2. Country music – interest in vocal quality. Musicians moving from country to R&B.
    - 3. Folk Music – 30s revival and political consciousness raising. The idea that everyone could do it. But by the 60s musicians raised in folk had moved away from the idea that they represented their audiences e.g. Pete Seeger and Woody Guthrie to Arlo Guthrie; to Joan Baez and Bob Dylan.
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# Baby Boom Generation – My Generation

- Youth generation of early 1990s – the demographic bulge. The post war economic boom and mass employment gave economic power to teenagers – a new phenomena. Articulated by The Who's 'My Generation'
- Rock becomes a means of mass expression for youth groups within society.
- The problem lies in the relationship between music as a means of popular expression, and music as a means of making money. There are moments of breakdown when the music does express the needs of real communities- but it never takes the industry long to control and corrupt the results. Rock is interpreted by some as 'folk' form but appealing to a mass audience.

# Contextualisation - America

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- America under the Kennedys – John F. Kennedy assassinated in November 1963. Robert Kennedy assassinated in election to become Presidential candidate. Lyndon Johnson becomes president. 1964
  - Civil Rights era c.1956-1966.
  - Supreme Court struck down `separate but equal' ruling.
  - Cuban missile crisis 1962 – Bay of Pigs.
  - America becomes drawn into the Vietnam war when France gives up.
  - Johnson cannot contain American involvement in Vietnam and Nixon gets in on promise to end war 1968 – but with Kissinger escalates conflict and bombs Cambodia and Laos as well. The draft extended and many middle class kids seek to evade it.
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# Contextualisation - Britain

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- Britain under Macmillan and Tories (in power since 1951). Slogan `Never had it so good'. Great building schemes – motorways, council houses. Continue many labour policies.
  - End of Empire. Last batch of countries to go Independent. South Africa refuses and goes down apartheid avenue
  - Profumo scandal helps to bring in Labour government under Wilson – 1965. Slogan `white heat of technology. Nuclear power and progress. But in reality decay and industrial decline. Strikes and growing Union power.
  - Gold standard and economic stagnation. Decimalisation.
  - But London the place to be – and Carnaby Street the place to shop.
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# Post War Pop Anglo-American Tradition

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- The 45 and the post-war generation of teenagers produced the first manifestation of youth culture – Teds, Mods, Rockers, to Hippies, Punks.
  - Each successive generation has produced youth subcultures that have defined themselves by the music they consume. You are a mod because you listen to the music – you also have the hair and clothes, etc – but the consuming the music is vital. It binds and connects the group.
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# 1960s Britain and Popular Music

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- Conservatism ruled on BBC but British youth were keenly interested in American developments. BBC had Home service, Light programme and Third. American pop only on Luxemburg, and from 1964 Radio Caroline. Trad Jazz had a following in Britain. Radio one not started until 1967.
  - Skiffle craze from late 50s – Freight Train and Rock Island Line. Blend of blues `Jug' bands and folk. Anyone could have a go.
  - Big folk revival – Dylan and Baez. Protest and folk to the individual picture. Bringing it all back home – greatest album (1965).
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# Beatles chart the 60s

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- The story of Beatles really charts that of popular music through the 60s.
  - Formed from the Quarrymen (started in 1956). Periods in Hamburg and changes to personnel created the Beatles that we know by 1962.
  - Taken up by Parlophone (EMI) and given George Martin to work with - they produced steady hits throughout the mid 60s.
  - By 1962 they were composing their own material from preference.
  - The tradition of one way pop exports (from America) by taking the American market by storm. From then on there is Brit invasion (Stones, Who, Hermans Hermits, etc.) The Monkeys the attempt at an American response.
  - Ed Sullivan show appearance broke all viewing records.
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# Beatles to Sergeant Pepper

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- They played live until 1967 but were totally inadequately amplified. 30 Watt Vox Valve Amps and non-solid electric guitars meant that they could not hear themselves as they played – because of the hysterical fans.
  - Incessant tours of UK and all over the world – Far East, Australia, Hong Kong, etc, meant that they were physically and mentally exhausted.
  - Drugs turned from uppers (amphetamines, speed, etc), to downers as the decades progressed. By 1965 John had moved on to Cannabis (experimented with Heroin) and by 1966 LSD was on the scene. This development comes through in the music.
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# Crisis of late 60s

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- By 1967 the Beatles were fed up with their lot. Become hippies.
  - Turned to the studio – Beach Boys ‘Pet Sounds’ had shown what was possible.
  - Spent months in the studio producing the first true concept Album – Sergeant Pepper – full of new technology/recording techniques and was loosely meant to hang together as a compositional entity.
  - Start Abbey Road Studios and Apple Label started – which is shambolic and financially hopeless. Too many hippie ideals get in the way of hard nosed music business. Some artistic finds however.
  - They could not, nor had any intention of trying to re-produce their studio albums live. Became an ‘Album band’ with singles as a side line, and no real attempt to perform live again.
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# Fragmentation

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- John and Paul moved in different directions. John towards `art' and political consciousness and Paul towards more gentle pop/rock.
- George takes his own direction with Eastern religion (Hari Krishna, etc) and mysticism.
- John takes up with Yoko and gets into all sorts of *avante garde* art music, and direct political statements. Increasingly pulled by New York art scene.
- By 1970 they are finished and there is a acrimonious split – legal frenzy ensues.

# The Who

- 1964 started. Anger a trademark Townsend smashing up his guitar.
- Led by Townsend who wrote the material.
- Hope I die before I get old – band members reputedly hated each other – and everyone else.
- 1965 'My Generation' first big hit.
- Stole show at Monterey Pop Festival in 1967 with live act.
- Tommy 1969 – first Rock Musical.
- Forward locking in having a singer that sang in an aggressive style without guitar and used the microphone stand as accessory to the Townsend combined both rhythm and lead guitar.