CHUDI HUA

This thesis is submitted for the degree of PhD

Department of School of Arts

Lancaster University

United Kingdom

Abstract

This thesis conducts a comprehensive examination of nostalgia, using the iconic phenomenon of the Beatles as a key case study. Their enduring popularity exemplifies how nostalgia generates complex, cross-generational resonances, serving as a conduit for collective memory and identity formation. It encapsulates how past cultural phenomena continue to shape present experiences and future expectations. The research initially reveals the theoretical foundations of nostalgia, tracing its evolution from a psychological issue to a powerful tool for understanding human experience. It explores how nostalgia, once considered a malaise, has transformed into a complex web of emotions and memories, influencing individual well-being and social dynamics. An important aspect of the research is the exploration of nostalgia in the context of postmodernism, particularly how postmodern theories and hauntology, intertwine with nostalgic sentiments. At its core, the study investigates the complexity of nostalgia, tracing its evolution from a psychological phenomenon to a potent cultural force. Through the unique perspective of the Beatles cultural phenomenon, it introduces the key concept of "The Rhythms of Nostalgia." The concept of nostalgic rhythms is the cornerstone of this research. I introduce a novel framework for understanding how nostalgia operates in a cyclical manner, influencing and being influenced by cultural trends, social changes, and personal experiences. This rhythm pattern of nostalgia is dissected through national development and cultural practices, highlighting its decisive role in cultural narratives and practices.

Additionally, the thesis explores the practical impact of nostalgia on contemporary society. It delves into the phenomenon of nostalgic consumption, particularly how nostalgia bidirectionally influences urban development and cultural consumption in the context of Liverpool's cultural heritage. Furthermore, this thesis offers a detailed description of the application of "rhythms of nostalgia" in different cultural contexts, which can be understood through different perspectives. The thesis concludes with a critical reflection on the limitations of nostalgia research

and potential future directions. This study advocates for a broader, more inclusive understanding of nostalgia's role in shaping global cultural characteristics.

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research. I declare that this thesis has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification at this or any other university.

Chapter 0: Introduction

0.1 Research Context and Purpose

Nostalgia, originally coined by the Swiss physician Johannes Hofer in 1688 to describe a pathological yearning for home (Boym, 2001, p. 27), has undergone significant conceptual transformation in recent decades. Once understood as a mental illness or psychological disturbance associated with exile and spatial displacement, nostalgia is now widely recognised as a complex emotional and cultural phenomenon—one deeply embedded in processes of memory, identity construction, and symbolic meaning-making (Sedikides et al., 2008; Pickering and Keightley, 2006). This shift from pathology to possibility reflects broader changes in the way we engage with history, memory, and meaning.

This reevaluation of nostalgia coincides with structural changes in late capitalist and post-industrial societies, where accelerated technological development, social precarity, and political fragmentation have generated a pervasive sense of temporal dislocation (Jameson, 1991; Giddens, 1999). Within this context, nostalgia offers more than affective comfort; it functions as a means of reorienting the self and society by reconstructing imagined pasts to stabilise present identities (Radstone, 2007). As Boym (2001) notes, nostalgia is both an affective and epistemological structure—simultaneously a feeling and a way of knowing.

Against this backdrop, The Beatles, arguably one of the most recognisable and culturally influential phenomena of the twentieth century, offer a powerful angle through which to examine the contemporary rhythms of nostalgia. As both artefacts and agents of cultural memory, their presence in Liverpool's urban landscape, economic identity, and affective imaginary positions them not merely as musical icons but as enduring mediators of the past. Their continued reproduction through tourism infrastructure, commemorative spaces, media representations, and fan culture makes them an ideal case study for exploring how nostalgia is culturally and emotionally orchestrated.

This thesis investigates the phenomenon of what I term "rhythm of nostalgia": a conceptual framework that sees nostalgia as structured through patterned repetitions of emotional and cultural engagement over time. Rather than treating nostalgia as a singular or fixed emotion, this study explores its recurring presence and its capacity to reappear in culturally mediated forms: music, tourism, visual iconography, and memory sites. Through the case of the Beatles in Liverpool, I examine how nostalgia is rhythmically activated in both institutional narratives and personal experience, and how it shapes collective memory, spatial identity, and affective meaning.

The process of this research is three parts. First, it undertakes a comprehensive review of nostalgia studies, tracing the conceptual transformation of nostalgia from a pathological condition into a complex and multifaceted field of cultural, affective, and theoretical inquiry. This exploration pays particular attention to how nostalgia intersects with memory, identity, and temporality in the context of late modern and post-industrial societies. Second, the thesis applies these theoretical insights to the case of the Beatles in Liverpool, analysing how nostalgia is articulated and materialised through commemorative practices, urban regeneration strategies, mediated representations, and the practices of fan communities. This case study demonstrates how nostalgia functions as a cultural mediator that bridges past and present, shaping local identity, emotional resonance, and heritage narratives. Finally, the thesis develops and advances the concept of the "rhythm of nostalgia" as its central theoretical contribution. This concept is proposed as a patterned and recursive structure that organises affective and cultural engagement with the past, offering a new perspective through which to understand how collective memory is constructed, circulated, and reactivated across time and media.

Through this approach, the thesis aims to contribute not only to nostalgia studies but also to broader debates within cultural theory, affect studies, and urban memory. It argues that nostalgia is not merely a return to the past, but a rhythmic force that structures emotional life, mediates temporality, and shapes our collective encounters with history.

0.2 Definition of Nostalgia

Having established the cultural and theoretical context in which this study is situated, it is now necessary to provide a precise and historically grounded definition of nostalgia. While the term has been widely adopted across disciplines, from psychology and sociology to cultural studies and marketing. Its meaning remains contested, multifaceted, and often diffuse. This conceptual ambiguity is further complicated by nostalgia's dual role as both a personal emotion and a collective cultural force. In order to clarify the conceptual foundation of this thesis, and to distinguish the "rhythm of nostalgia" as an original contribution, the following traces the definitional evolution of nostalgia, from its pathological origins to its contemporary role as a force in emotional and cultural life.

In the modern popular perception, nostalgia is synonymous with retro frenzy; fashion and trendiness are its characteristics, and it carries significantly few derogatory overtones. Nostalgia is outwardly plain, but essentially a relatively complex arrangement of multiple emotional elements (Jacobsen, 2020). But it was not from the very beginning of the emergence of nostalgia that society accepted the sentiment as such, and even nostalgia of the past and nostalgia of the modern era are of two very different natures. Nostalgia began with medicine, not poetry or stories, contrary to the intuition of its origins, and in 1688 the Swiss physician Johannes Hofer first used the German word "Heimweh" to describe the deep pain experienced by travellers who were far from home. From the word's origin, this comes from a familiar Greek story Odyssey. In Homer's story, Odysseus fights for ten years in the Trojan War, and after the battle is over, he makes the arduous journey home for another decade. He constantly yearns to be reunited with his devoted wife Penelope and his son, and he encounters cannibals, drugs, alluring women, and the hostility of Poseidon. After returning to his home town Ithaca, he still cannot see his wife. He united with his son Telemachus and killed his wife's suitors and unfaithful servants to resume his role as a husband. He was going back to the feminine figure of Penelope, which we could also understand as a return to Freud's claim that the wife is a mother substitute. According to Freud's (1962) psychoanalytic theory of attachment, the development of attachment is attributed

to the mother's satisfaction with the child's instinctive drives. Besides the purpose of reunion, Odysseus also hopes to return to the person he once was by reclaiming his lost identity and becoming the same person again, before he fought in the Trojan War all those years ago. He underwent a slow and painful transition from being a foreigner back to his own home and his own place. Even though this intense longing to return causes him unbearable pain, he still intensely longs to see his return (Sedikides, Wildschut and Baden, 2004). In this story, nostalgia is present as a force that can overcome difficulties, and it belongs to Odysseus's psychological resources to achieve final victory (Sedikides et al., 2015). It spoke to our intrinsic need for continuity, security and identity, as seen in the odyssey of homecoming, the foothold that the soul seeks in a world of change and unpredictability. The word 'nostos' in Greek is used to express the desire to return home, and 'algos' represent this suffering caused by the longing, and nostalgia is the psychological suffering caused by the unrelenting desire to return home (Sedikides, Wildschut and Baden, 2004).



Figure 1. Ulysses and the Sirens by John William Waterhouse (1891)

Hofer outlined the experiences that triggered the development and worsening of nostalgia, including weather, foreign customs, food, etc., and in his theory, nostalgia could be healed by appropriate remedies (Hofer, 1688/1934). Theodore Calhoun, an American military physician, believed that nostalgia did not depend entirely on the individual's health, but also on his or her personality and social

background, for example boatmen were more resistant to the disease than farmers (Starobinski and Kemp, 1966). Dr. Albert von Haller noted that one of the early symptoms of nostalgia was the ability to hear voices or see ghosts (Boym, 2001, p. 27). In the past, when nostalgia was considered a disease, the prescriptions for it changed over time. In the 17th century, doctors considered nostalgia to be similar to a self-curing disease such as the flu; in the 19th century, optimistic doctors suggested that nostalgia could be cured with the specialisation of medicine, but this illusion essentially conflated nostalgia with tuberculosis (Starobinski and Kemp, 1966). As Charles Darwin suggested, nostalgia may be an adaptive response to social stress, yet it was often still pathologised or dismissed in modern science (Darwin and Prodger, 1998).

At the end of the 18th century, an increasing number of Romantic poets and writers approached nostalgia with appreciation, where progressive modern ideas and anti-modern claims of maintaining a stable past merged and repelled each other (Terdiman, 1993).

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, nostalgia remained a marginalised and suspect emotion. William James (1884) proposed a more neutral reading by equating emotions with bodily changes, thus paving the way for understanding nostalgia as a perceptual, rather than pathological, state (cited in Dodman, 2018, p. 3). However, social critics such as Tannock (1995) continued to treat nostalgia as regressive and reactionary, especially when deployed in political rhetoric or cultural conservatism.

In the 20th century nostalgia was considered to be a disease that could be suppressed within a certain time and space frame. After World War I, nostalgia had to be transformed through cultural expressions of nostalgia to cope with the postwar trauma, and at this time nostalgia also became socially tolerated (Arnold-de-Simine, 2013). Nostalgia serves as a specific mode of reminiscence in which the painful parts are automatically blocked out and the pleasant experiences are elevated to a prominent position (Davis, 2011). As a democratic illness, nostalgia as a form of melancholia is not only a personal anxiety, but an overt threat to social tensions and politics (Beunders, 2011). In times of accelerated life and historical

upheaval, nostalgia inevitably reappears as a defence mechanism (Boym, 2001). Nostalgia was often used as a pejoratively used ideological indoctrination to escape reality, with people mainly trying to escape cruel and unfortunate social problems and ignore the mistakes of the past (Arnold-de-Simine, 2013). Starting in the 60s, most commentators considered nostalgia to be a regressive act, typically right-wing, and a negative reactionary behaviour that is detrimental to the political advancement and the individual's development (Glazer, 2005). Within these rules of antipathy towards nostalgia, the faint praise of nostalgia is overdone (Brown, 2018). People will allow the same points of consciousness and empathy to be shared within the same social premise, and a numbed postwar morality allows anger and pain to act as the driving force, which accounts for the prevalence of sadism and masochism in postwar art (Nuttall, 1968). Social scientists in the field of nostalgia after the 1980s actually ignored nostalgia itself and turned their attention from nostalgia to the emotional issues that nostalgia evokes, such as fear, love, trust, shame, guilt, anger, jealousy, etc. (Jacobsen, 2018).

Elihu S. Howland (1962) once described nostalgia as one of the most surprising forces and has a bittersweet allure. Svetlana Boym wrote in *The Future of Nostalgia* (2001) that the object of seductive nostalgia is notoriously elusive. The composer Gustav Mahler's concept of "ambivalently loved mother after separation" was explained by Pietro Castelnuovo-Tedesco (1980) as the reason for this nature of nostalgia. He argues that it is sweet as the original object or event gives pleasure and also because this pleasure is enhanced by idealisation. It is bitter, not only in the sense that it cannot return, but also because it contains conflict and disappointment even in its original context (Batcho, 2013).

In the 21st century, nostalgia has been widely rehabilitated as a legitimate emotional condition and a productive cultural mode. Nostalgia is no longer perceived as a disease, but as a modern condition that cannot be changed (Boym, 2001). It is common to maintain anxiety about the past in modern life, but different descriptions of the past emerge in various groups, as if they are competing for territory in the romance of the past (Wright, 2009). This progression epitomises the changing mindset of the community and the development of science and

demonstrates the growth of people's education and changing needs. As a common feature of human experience, Nostalgia has begun to be applied across the board within global cultures (Legge, 1971). Research on nostalgia no longer belongs to any particular discipline, gradually spreading to psychology, sociology, literature, philosophy and computer science (Boym, 2001).

In Yearning for Yesterday: A Sociology of Nostalgia, Sociologist Fred Davis posited a three-tier concept of nostalgia to unpack the complex emotions individuals and collectives hold towards the past (Davis, 1979). The first tier, personal nostalgia, refers to a direct yearning for specific moments from one's own life. Secondly, collective nostalgia reflects a shared longing within a particular group or society for a common history or 'golden age', whilst the third tier, meta-nostalgia, denotes a conscious or reflective sentiment about the very act of reminiscing itself. Boym (2001) simplifies Davis' (1979) three-tier nostalgia, distinguished modern nostalgia as two main components. One of these, restorative nostalgia, focuses on the potential to recover the past in the present, using shared cultural memory to reconstruct the nation's history. Reflective nostalgia reflects the past through the present, allowing for questioning past issues and offering a subjective vision of yesteryear. This nostalgia is neither idealised nor oversimplified but reflects the group's past (Wojciechowska, 2021). The differences between both are that restorative nostalgia attempts to be able to conquer time and space it, and reflective nostalgia cherishes fragments of broken memories and temporalises space (Boym, 2001). Building on this, Womack and Kapurch (2016) consider that there could be a third, proleptic nostalgia, which is named utilising storytelling. We take the past and imaginatively project it into a future time, which is not the paradox of the two formers. This nostalgia allows the past to mix with a future that would be denied, and even though we know it cannot happen, we still persist in imagining it (Womack and Kapurch, 2016).

Melanie Hviid Jacobsen (2020) classified nostalgia according to its manifestations into political, personal, economic, religious, cultural, technological and ecological. In the sociological literature nostalgia is polymorphic, i.e., nostalgia could be reluctant and hostile, progressive and productive or playful and ironic

(May, 2017; Boym, 2001; Pickering and Keightley, 2006). While utopia is often used to describe a projection of a better world in the future, nostalgia often stands in contrast to utopia and represents a longing for the distant past and what came before (Magagnoli, 2015b). Morris B. Holbrook (1993) suggests that nostalgia is a longing for the past, a yearning for yesterday, or a fondness for days gone by. Nostalgia evokes a society in which the present problems are solved, which is also common with utopias, which arise from dissatisfaction with the present stage of life or problems (Magagnoli, 2015a).

This evolving definition of nostalgia, from pathology to cultural logic, which reveals its complexity as both an individual affect and a collective social practice. Rather than a fixed emotion, nostalgia is increasingly recognised as a temporal and affective structure: it emerges cyclically, responds to social rupture, and takes shape through media, memory, and ritual. It is in this context that this thesis proposes the concept of the rhythm of nostalgia, which is not a new type of nostalgia, but as a theoretical framework for understanding how nostalgia progress: as a patterned emotional rhythm that reappears, transforms, and circulates across cultural and historical settings.

0.3 From Retromania to Rhythmic Nostalgia

Nostalgia, fundamentally, represents a longing for the past imbued with both personal and collective significance. Historically perceived as a malady of the soul, nostalgia has undergone a significant reappraisal in contemporary academia. My initial formal engagement with the allure of nostalgia was through Simon Reynolds' Retromania (2011) which extensively demonstrates the recycling and repurposing of the past within the music domain. Prior to this, my understanding of nostalgia was confined to its private aspect, such as the recollection of past times through the collection of ornaments, books, and records. Furthermore, my sustained interest in nostalgia is due to its evolving trajectory in academic discourse and its pervasive impact on contemporary culture. Originally a medical concept, the term nostalgia has evolved into a complex emotional and cognitive phenomenon. Current psychological perspectives regard nostalgia as a positive emotion, associated with positivity and even happiness (Wilks and Kelly, 2008). Particularly as people's lives become economically unstable, the past appears more comforting and secure (Brocken, 2015). This has also spurred some theorists to debate the duality of nostalgia, particularly the sadness arising in moments of loss (Sedikides et al., 2004). Now, nostalgia can be summarized as a sophisticated emotional amalgamation, intertwining people's fundamental longings and warm joys with an obsession for the past and the recalibration of memories (Arnold-de-Simine, 2013). The absent beauty of nostalgia, non-existent in real time, yet fundamentally connected, presents a contradiction that fuels my curiosity and desire for deeper discussion on whether nostalgia is inherently conservative or backward-looking (Sexton, 2012). This quest to unveil nostalgia's role as a complex emotional and cultural force; forms the conceptual transition from retromania to what I propose as the rhythm of nostalgia.

Reynolds (2011) argues that we now live in a cultural moment defined by pop culture's addiction to its own past. In an age where innovation is often delayed by endless recycling, nostalgia is not simply remembered, it is remediated and repackaged as content, style and experience. Music, fashion, and media are all dominated by retro trends that reference and revive past forms, sometimes more

eagerly than they pursue new expressions. In this cultural situation, our relationship with the future is replaced by an obsession with reviving and perfecting the past. And nostalgia becomes not only a feeling but a framework of production, a logic by which time, memory, and emotion are cyclically structured. Fredric Jameson (1991) famously argued that postmodern culture is characterised by pastiche and the recycling of historical styles, giving rise to a nostalgia that is aesthetic rather than historical, a style without melancholy. However such consumption still follow specific rhythm: it returns, recurs, and resonates with affective patterns shaped by individual and collective memory.

This tendency toward revival does not merely signify repetition, but repetition with variation. Each revival cycle introduces new textures to old meanings. This is where my thesis proposes the concept of the rhythm of nostalgia: a theoretical model that conceptualises nostalgia not as a single event or affect, but as a recursive and patterned cultural rhythm. Rather than understanding nostalgia as a single response to temporal loss, I propose it as a rhythmic mechanism, a structure that guides the cultural recurrence of emotions, memories, and aesthetic styles.

The rhythm of nostalgia builds on the idea of mise-en-abyme, a recursive structure where images, sounds, or narratives reflect themselves in nested layers. Like mirrors facing each other, nostalgic moments often reflect not the past directly, but previous representations of the past. For example, in the Beatles' legacy, we see not only the revivals of their music but the repetition of image, ideology, narratives, and affective experiences across generations. Each return to their imagery or sound introduces reinterpretation, recontextualisation, and a fresh layer of emotional engagement. Nostalgia is not static; it is a fluid cycle, a cultural rhythm that structures how time and emotion flow through media, identity, and memory.

This cyclical model is not accidental. As Boym (2001) reminds us, nostalgia is always both personal and collective. In the digital age, it becomes programmable and distributable. Through social media, playlist algorithms, retro-themed products, and immersive fan spaces, nostalgic experiences are curated and

synced to collective memory cycles. The same music may trigger childhood memories in one listener and retro curiosity in another. Each of these affective responses is layered into the ongoing rhythm that gives nostalgia its cultural potency.

Thus, the rhythm of nostalgia reveals not only how we long for the past, but when, why, and in what form such longing becomes meaningful. It explains why nostalgia returns in familiar forms across eras, why specific cultural figures (like the Beatles) maintain recursive relevance, and how affect is patterned across time. It is not merely a reaction to historical change but a mechanism of cultural continuity.

0.4 My Journey in Liverpool

Choosing the Beatles as the focal point of my doctoral research was both coincidental and inevitable. Coincidental, I did not grow up immersed in the cultural environment that had made them legendary. I come from a country where rock culture is a bit far away from my adolescence, and the Beatles represent rock music and the Cavern Wall of Fame with a lot of stars' signatures in my mind. The Beatles felt like a distant fashion of another era. I initially resisted them, because it was a fashion of the past and not modern enough. As the Internet gradually came into my life, and my knowledge of the world expanded, the concept of the Beatles has changed. I no longer cared about what was currently popular, and societal trends began to honor and seek out the past. Upon arriving in Britain from China, I found that nostalgia had become a lifestyle. The government considered leveraging nostalgia's capacity to generate value, using the potential wealth of historical landmarks and the tourism industry to help economically troubled cities rejuvenate, a practice now institutionalized by governmental bodies (Shaw, 1992).

British society has always been culturally manipulated, from the imperial culture that preceded the war, to the cultural domination that began with the Beatles, and the royal culture that continues to this day (Wright, 2009). When people mention James Bond, they picture the Secret Intelligence Service; when they think of Sherlock Holmes, they picture late 19th century London. The first book I read that had any connection to Britain was Oliver Twist (Dickens, 2010), and the most impressive thing that struck me was the constantly raining British weather. British culture has always taken with a well-preserved past, which provokes people to discover it. Unlike the iconography of London or the traditions of Oxford, Liverpool's identity is inseparable from its port heritage and the legacy of the Beatles It epitomises the nostalgic charm of Britain. There is no deliberate construction of monotonous modern architecture, and each city has its own story and style. Particularly within city museums, one can witness the city's preserved past. This is not a sudden creation or accumulation but a harmonious interweaving and continuous cycle over time, an evolution of traditional customs that has established a normative pattern. This pattern also fosters new consumer

behaviours and modalities, whose regularity and prevalence are worthy of examination. To better explore the new rhythms of nostalgia, I embarked on a journey to Liverpool.

My first visit to Liverpool transformed my theoretical curiosity into lived experience. I took a trip to Liverpool with my supervisors Professor Charlie Gere and Dr. Rachel Perry in October 2021. Starting with a cup of coffee at Lancaster train station, Charlie and I caught the train to Liverpool, a journey I had been looking forward to for a long time. Whilst Liverpool wasn't that far away, it was the first time I had ever been. Charlie and I talked about many interesting things on the train, including experiences at home and food. Needless to say, when people start talking about everything about their hometown, they really can't stop. As an international student in a foreign country, it is easy to remember many details belonging to my hometown, especially the food. We met up with Rachel at Liverpool Lime Street Station and it was a pleasant start to the day. The weather was overcast that morning and it was really windy, I remember now that I wore a trench coat that day to combat the wind. Walking out of the railway station, I saw St George's Hall, which immediately gave me a unique atmosphere from other cities in England. The grandeur and width of the Victorian building were the first things that struck me, and despite the construction work in the surrounding area, the neo-Greek building, which is part of the World Heritage Site of Liverpool, still shows its time. This period feeling tells me that the stories I know are true, that this place has a splendour to be proud of, and that there is a grandeur and expanse that I don't feel in other cities. On the other side of the station is the Britannia Adelphi Hotel (Figure 2), which Charlie told me was the most luxurious hotel outside of London in the early 1920's. When I entered the lobby, I could already picture upper class women attending a ball in elaborate dresses. These buildings have held thrilling stories that have fascinated people through time. Whilst today it no longer restricted access, I still have a profound disconnect with it, which may be inherent to thoughts of past, and do these factors really go away with the passage of time?

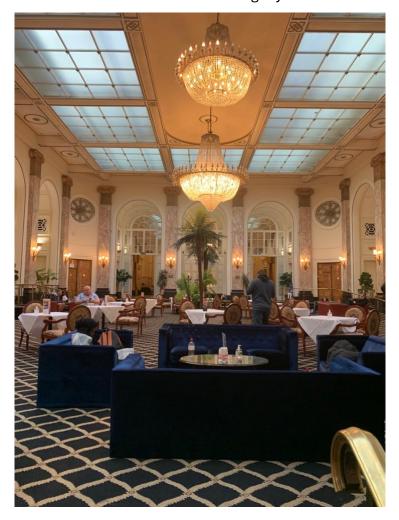


Figure 2. Britannia Adelphi Hotel Lobby. Source: Photo taken by the author

We didn't join our booked Magic Mystery Tour as soon as we arrived in Liverpool, so we did plenty on the walkover. On the streets, I realised that Liverpool has a surprising number of pubs. It has reached the point where there is one just a few steps away. I could imagine fans singing You'll Never Walk Alone while drinking at night. On the way to Albert Dock, I saw a lot of alleyway walls with brightly coloured graffiti and painted Beatles members, in the style that young people like. Of course, I saw the super famous Beatles sculpture, which I took a picture of even though I had seen it countless times on various social media outlets. The tourists, many of them middle-aged, were dressed in the same Beatles clothes, taking pictures in front of the sculpture and singing in the street. The energy and love they generated is something I hardly see in my country.



Figure 3. The Albert Dock. Source: Photo taken by the author

The most important part of the visit is the Magical Mystery Tour, which starts at the station in front of the museum The Beatles Story. At The Beatles Story, we can see the Beatles' history, legacy and rich collection. There were at least three identically painted buses at the entrance. Before the awaited start, we rested in the cloisters on the seafront of the Albert Dock (Figure 2). Sitting in the cafe that circles the harbour with views of the Cunard Building, Port of Liverpool Building and The Royal Liver Building, the buildings around here all carry a sense of storytelling that inspires one to imagine what happened in each room. I would wonder if there might have been any famous shootings in this place, and if Edward VII's time was as described in the novels. How did people move around on these boats? What kind of shows did perform in this bar during the past? All these questions are about the past, where I would unconsciously start to imagine what life was like in the past. Walking through this circular piazza, I saw almost every Beatles-themed souvenir shop and art gallery. One candy shop, in particular, had a window display of large Beatles murals spelt out in multi-coloured jelly beans as shown in Figure 4. We were joking about whether someone would break it for candy. Needless to say Liverpool is a Beatles fan's paradise, where you can find anything and stories you could imagine to be associated with the Beatles.



Figure 4. A big Beatles mosaic in the shop window made of multicoloured jellybeans.

Source: Photo taken by the author

The Albert Dock has lost its fundamental role as a harbour past and transformed into museums and tourist attractions, with the Tate Gallery, the Maritime Museum and the Beatles Story Museum all in the area. With plenty of time to spare, we first went to the International Slavery Museum, which showcases the history of the transatlantic slave trade and its legacy.



Figure 5. Exhibition on the history of slavery in the Maritime Museum. Source: Photo taken by the author



Figure 6. Exhibition on the history of slavery in the Maritime Museum. Source: Photo taken by the author

I did not consider that this slave history would have any impact on my research at that point, and I was just looking at the city's entire journey from black slavery to glory to poverty with the attitude of a tourist (Figure 5,6). Before visiting the museum, my feelings about enslaved Black people were not noticeable, I felt distant and unfamiliar. This museum documents Liverpool's journey to the world by sea, including the transatlantic slave trade, immigration, merchant ships and the Titanic. I felt that the presentation of history in the museum was objective and straightforward. I can judge more objectively when this history is less relevant to the history of my ethnicity. As I delved into the meaning of Blackness in Liverpool in the years that followed, I began to wonder if there was a history beyond the harbour city factor that allowed it to embrace black rock music in the first place. Which city histories had the most influence on the Beatles' success? And how does Liverpool rely on these pasts to move forward? Is it unable or unwilling to abandon them?

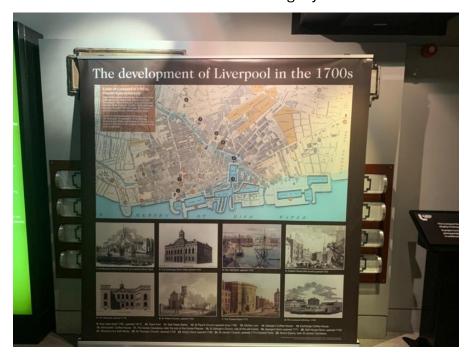


Figure 7. Poster in the Maritime Museum: The development of Liverpool in the 1700s. Source: Photo taken by the author



Figure 8. Long Banner Painting in the Maritime Museum: The Liverpool look like in the 1907. Source: Photo taken by the author

After our lunchtime coffee, we boarded the vibrant relic of the olden days, a bus exactly like the one in the film *Magical Mystery Tour*, and I felt a mixture of anticipation and unspeakable sadness. Brightly coloured and decorated with

psychedelic motifs and images of the Beatles Four, the bus stood out from the roadside. As we travelled through the city, each site was a touchstone for a moment in Beatles' history, yet it wasn't the grandeur of these places that struck me, but their ordinariness. Penny Lane, immortalised in song, is just another street, perhaps with a barber inside displaying photographs of everyone he's had the pleasure of knowing. Get off at Strawberry Field (Figure 9), about which John Lennon wrote one of his most evocative songs. There were lots of people posing for photos in front of the iconic red gates, though we weren't allowed to go inside the building for a tour.



Figure 9. Strawberry Field. Source: Photo taken by the author

This old Victorian building was once a children's home. Time flows and freezes here. As the tour continued, passing by the childhood homes of Beatles members. These weren't grand mansions, but humble houses in typical Liverpool neighbourhoods that were really ordinary and lived in. In these humble surroundings, the dreams and talents of four young men came together to create something that would change the musical landscape forever. Most of these landscapes were short visits though, after all it was only half a day, and as we drove past certain sights the guide tended to direct our attention to one side of the bus or the other. Luckily, I was seated at the window and had a good view of

specific sights, but I preferred to watch the tourists singing along with the guide, and I wondered where the enthusiasm came from.



Figure 10. The John Lennon statue opposite the Cavern Club on Matthew Street. Source:

Photo taken by the author

Our final destination was the Cavern Club and as soon as I stepped out of the car I was greeted by the Liverpool Wall of Fame (Figure 10), a record of glory, which pays tribute to the many artists who have played on the club's stage. The wall is adorned with many bricks, each engraved with the name of an artist or band that has played at the club, unsurprisingly the Beatles stand out the most. The wall is like a chronicle of musical history, showing the changing flavours of music through the ages, and the continuous nature of the musical heritage it represents is astounding. Before I entered the Cavern Club, I thought it was still early enough in the evening that it might be quiet inside the club, like a simple museum. But when I went inside, everything was different from what I thought, it was a sudden and exhilarating feeling. In this dimly lit underground space, the air seemed to be filled with the echoes of years gone by. There was a feeling of reverence here, a sense of sacredness that resonated deep within me.



Figure 11. The stone door inside the Cavern Club. Source: Photo taken by the author

Entering that moment was like travelling back in time, with a tribute band playing on stage and the audience singing along with their drinks as shown in Figure 12. And others were viewing the collection as if they were in a museum. Every note of their music haunts the space, and the air inside is filled with the ghosts of melodies past. This residual energy can stir something deep within me. The walls are covered with Beatles memorabilia, each one a testament to a pivotal moment that took place here. The stage is tiny and unassuming, but quietly bears witness to the early days of the Beatles' performances. When they played here, they wouldn't have realised the huge impact they would be having on the world. Walking through the club, I felt a solid connection to the Beatles, their music, and the era they represented. In my opinion, the Cavern is a magical place; live music fills the space and the artists continue to pay homage to the Beatles, ensuring that the magic of those early days doesn't fade away with time. The club is a living museum, paying homage to the past while vibrantly showcasing the present. More than just a physical space, the Cavern Club is a portal to the past, allowing me and other visitors to experience the connection to the 60s.



Figure 12. A tribute band playing on stage in the Cavern Club. Source: Photo taken by the author

I think today's journey is not just about seeing a place, but about re-experiencing or connecting with a bygone era. The nostalgia it evokes is both personal and collective. It is a unique form of nostalgia that transcends personal experiences and taps into shared cultural memories across generations. Magical Mystery Tour took me through a few places very much steeped in time and memories, especially for me as a young person who does not belong to the same culture, and most intuitively felt the influence and fascination that the Beatles have given to the city and its people. In Liverpool, rather than sterile modernity, I encountered layered memory, like meeting an old friend. This was not nostalgia as fantasy; it was nostalgia as infrastructure, as everyday atmosphere, as ritual. In this city, memory was not hidden; it was curated, circulated, and spatially embedded. I was struck by the power of nostalgia, not only as an emotion but as a force that shapes our understanding of history, culture and identity. At the Cavern Club and on the streets of Liverpool, nostalgia is not just about looking back, it is about connecting the past to the present and understanding our place in the time continuum. I am grateful and awed by the enduring legacy of the Beatles. Their music and stories have become part of our collective consciousness, our shared heritage. In this city, the past is not a distant, static entity, but a living present. I realise that as a nostalgia researcher, I am both a witness and a participant in this evolving story.

0.5 Research Questions and Chapter Overview

This thesis is guided by five central research questions that collectively address how nostalgia functions as a cultural, emotional, and temporal structure in the context of the Beatles' enduring legacy in Liverpool. Each question contributes to the construction of a theoretical framework that conceptualises the "rhythm of nostalgia" as a patterned, affective phenomenon in contemporary cultural life.

The first question investigates how the concept of nostalgia has evolved in contemporary cultural theory. It seeks to understand how nostalgia is no longer merely regarded as a personal or regressive emotion but increasingly theorised as a socially embedded and historically contingent structure. The second question examines how a literature-based interpretive approach can serve as a rigorous methodological strategy to analyse the relationship between nostalgia, cultural memory, and mediated representation. Rather than relying on empirical fieldwork, this study employs an interdisciplinary synthesis of cultural theory, media analysis, and historical documentation to illuminate how the Beatles' legacy is narrated, preserved, and consumed. The third question turns to the specific historical and cultural conditions of postwar Britain that gave rise to the Beatles and the youth cultures that surrounded them. It asks how the economic reconstruction, shifting class identities, and the rise of mass media in the postwar and 1960s created strong foundation for the emergence of Beatlemania. The fourth question discusses how nostalgia is materially and symbolically manifested in the Beatles' afterlife within Liverpool's contemporary urban and cultural landscape. It focuses on the ways in which the city actively reproduces and remediates the Beatles' memory through tourism infrastructures, heritage policies, commemorative institutions, fan cultures, and spatial storytelling. The fifth question theorises the central concept of this thesis: the rhythm of nostalgia. It asks how nostalgia operates not as a static sentiment but as a dynamic, recurring pattern, a rhythm that organises affect, memory, and cultural production across time and media.

To respond to these questions, the thesis is structured across six chapters, each designed to contribute to the theoretical development and empirical substantiation of the "rhythm of nostalgia" framework. The chapters progress from conceptual exploration to case specific analysis, culminating in theoretical synthesis and reflection. Below is an outline of the thesis structure:

Chapter 1: Literature Review

This chapter reviews the existing literature relevant to the theme of nostalgia, specifically focusing on its theoretical background, the transformative process of postmodern nostalgia, and the consumer culture associated with the nostalgia market, encompassing psychological and philosophical perspectives. This chapter also explores relevant theoretical frameworks, particularly hauntology, cultural memory studies, and emotional theory, to provide a foundation for the concept of "Rhythm of Nostalgia."

Chapter 2: Methodology

This chapter outlines the research design, which combines conceptual textual analysis of key theoretical works with a case study approach focused on Liverpool and The Beatles.

Chapter 3: Case Study – The Beatles in Liverpool

This chapter examines the Beatles as a case study to understand the evolutionary model and patterns of nostalgia, thereby providing robust evidence for the proposed theory. It will explore the cultural context of the Beatles' emergence, the youth culture they represented, their dynamic impact on Britain and the world, and the preservation of their legacy and cultural heritage. Furthermore, this chapter investigates Liverpool as a site of cultural memory and a product of nostalgia, with a particular focus on the Beatles' role in contemporary culture and the collective efforts made to preserve their memory.

Chapter 4: Case Study: Findings

This chapter analyses the mutually symbiotic relationship between Liverpool and the Beatles, demonstrating the capacity and necessity of nostalgia. It highlights

how Liverpool, propelled by the Beatles' legacy, transformed into a popular cultural tourism destination. The chapter further explores how these initiatives fostered the city's cultural preservation, economic revitalization, and enhanced its global identity. These findings illustrate the recursive and emotional dimensions of nostalgic practices, emphasizing how the past is presented through rhythm.

Chapter 5: Discussion/Analysis

This chapter interprets the research findings through the theoretical framework of Rhythm of Nostalgia. It explores the implications of nostalgia as a structural force in cultural production and identity formation. The chapter demonstrates the concrete applications of the Rhythm of Nostalgia by examining its manifestations across diverse contexts, including fashion, British nationalism, trauma, and culture.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This chapter summarizes the main insights of this research, reflects on its methodological and conceptual contributions, and offers recommendations for future studies on nostalgia, cultural memory, and mediated emotions.

Chapter 1: Literature review

1.1 Theoretical Origins of Nostalgia

While nostalgia has often been discussed in terms of its cultural and philosophical implications, its theoretical origins are deeply rooted in psychological and medical discourses. Initially classified as a form of homesickness or melancholia, nostalgia was long associated with mental distress and emotional instability (Rosen, 1975). Contemporary psychology has reinterpreted nostalgia as a complex emotional process, one that integrates longing, self-continuity, and emotional regulation. It is both a source of emotional pain and a reservoir of psychological resilience. Particularly significant is nostalgia's connection to early childhood experiences, where emotional ties, especially to maternal figures and which form the basis of later nostalgic recall (Batcho, 1998). This section explores the psychological origins of nostalgia, tracing its evolution from pathology to a crucial affective mechanism, and examining its intimate relation to childhood memory, security, and motherly attachment.

1.1.1 The Dual Nature of Nostalgia: Melancholy and Optimism

For many people, the essence of illness is a consciousness that dispels the destructive and aggressive aspects of the subconscious so that a particular social fear can be shaken off, providing a pathway out of the excessive accumulation of negative substances (Nuttall, 1968). As an instinct, nostalgia is also something unconscious, and in Freud's understanding, this unconscious is actually our original detached side in history (cited in Nuttall, 1968, p. 110). Human beings are conscious and self-aware, while life is finite, and these elements are somehow distanced from their material environment (Turner, 1987). In Georgian Britain, Scottish physician Robert Whytt famously observed that almost all illnesses were more or less neurologically damaging, and nostalgia was regarded as a subtype of melancholia, a mental illness (Arnold, 1786, cited in Dodman, 2018, p. 54).

Symptoms of nostalgia have been described as developmental delays, excessive attachment to the mother, habitual idealisation, and paradoxical mourning and melancholia. Mental illness may itself essentially be intriguing in a strange way

(Nuttall, 1968). In Shakespeare's tragedy Hamlet (1600 or 1601), Hamlet's behaviour and moods are often interpreted as symptoms of melancholia. A Treatise of Melancholie, Timothie Bright (1586) published only more than a decade before Hamlet (1600 or 1601), many speculations suggest that the understanding and portrayal of melancholia may have influenced Shakespeare at the time. Hamlet's melancholy, grief, anger, confusion and occasional paranoia all reflect his mental distress. Nostalgia is as an illusory illness that is transmitted through brain channels to all parts of the body, incapacitating the body with the main symptoms being nausea, loss of appetite, pathological changes in the lungs, inflammation of the brain, cardiac arrest, fever and suicidal tendencies (Tannock, 1995, cited in Cervellon and Brown, 2018, p. 15). The symptoms of such pathology are very similar to melancholia, such as vertigo, headaches, constant fear, sadness, dissatisfaction and anxiety (Wajda, 2008). Nostalgia and some states of mental illness can display isolation that does not fit into society (Nuttall, 1968). Nostalgic and melancholic people experience the strangeness of real life in their world and the alienation of the self-conscious individual from the world (Turner, 1987).

Lacan describes the "death drive" as a nostalgic longing, as the break in the symbiotic relationship with the mother caused by weaning becomes an indelible trace of the mind (quoted in Lacan, 1977, p. 205). Although the message of nostalgia does not appear in Freud's publications, Freud's approach ("Mourning and Melancholia", "Screen Memories" and "On Transience") profoundly influenced the conceptualisation of nostalgia (Batcho, 2013). Freud's privileged theory of "Mourning and Melancholia" (Freud, 1917) can be seen as a breakthrough in the identity of nostalgia, after which nostalgia was incorporated into psychiatry and memory was seen as a form of therapy.

Despite nostalgia's historical association with psychological vulnerability and emotional distress, contemporary psychological research increasingly recognises nostalgia as a resourceful and adaptive emotion. Rather than merely signalling illness or loss, nostalgia can function as a protective mechanism.

In the area of psychological problem repair, nostalgia helps to increase optimism, reduce loneliness and enhance perceived meaning in life (Hepper and Wildschut, et al., 2014). The root of the onset of nostalgia has been identified in a large body of literature as stemming from a lack of belonging, and this loss of belonging is due to factors such as displacement where individuals feel uneasy about their surroundings (Hartmann and Brunk, 2019). This absence may come from the environment and bad experiences of personal upbringing in childhood or youth, or macro-level changes in history and the national landscape (Hartmann and Brunk, 2019). Nostalgia is a self-relevant emotion associated with fond memories and has certain psychological functions, as evidenced by many studies (Hepper and Wildschut, et al., 2014).

As columnist Herb Caen (1975) has written, nostalgia is the removal of painful memories (cited in Sedikides et al., 2015, p. 206). Nostalgia removes the negative content of memories that make us feel shame, guilt or humiliation, not removed from memories, but removed in nostalgic reconstruction (Davis, 1979). Only when we are happy with our past can we carry reassurance and confidence in our present life with its challenges. The happiness of nostalgia empowers us with an ability to cope with challenges, and this underpinning comes from the sense of security we possess. As Fred Davis (1979) writes

The first is that no matter how one later comes to reevaluate that piece of past which is the object of his nostalgia—or, for that matter, irrespective of how he may later choose to interpret the meaning of the nostalgic experience itself—the nostalgic feeling is infused with imputations of past beauty, pleasure, joy, satisfaction, good- ness, happiness, love, and the like, in sum, any or several of the positive affects of being. Nostalgic feeling is almost never infused with those sentiments we commonly think of as negative—for example, unhappiness, frustration, despair, hate, shame, abuse (p. 14).

Nostalgia might have a strong resonance and popularity in modern society, possibly because it provides a sense of stability and security that is not present in the society of supporters. The public can get stable emotions contrary to work

through nostalgia, which is measured to prevent potential anxiety and emotional diseases in the society (Jacobsen, 2020). When nostalgia manifests itself as a collective experience, it may positively impact the development of social bonds (Koetz and Tankersley, 2016). Nostalgia often evokes fears and anxieties about the present and the future, which people reconstruct spontaneously and specifically to alleviate their fears (Davis, 2011). The impact of nostalgia is most positive especially when people are unsure of their new identities and roles in the present or when negative emotions dominate. In this respect, nostalgia is similar to the restoration of personality and to the help of public safety in times of social difficulty and stress.

Nostalgia can offer psychological resilience, enhancing mood, and fostering a sense of coherence in the face of uncertainty. This shift views nostalgia not as a retreat from the present, but as a forward-looking affective state capable of inspiring hope, agency, and meaning. This ambivalence: where nostalgia is simultaneously a site of early emotional vulnerability and later psychological strength, which can be further understood by tracing its origins in childhood memories and maternal attachments.

1.1.2 Nostalgia, Childhood and Motherhood

You must know that there is nothing higher, or stronger, or sounder, or more useful afterwards in life, than some good memory, especially a memory from childhood, from the parental home. You hear a lot said about your education, yet some such beautiful, sacred memory, preserved from childhood, is perhaps the best education. If a man stores up many such memories to take into life, then he is saved for his whole life. And even if only one good memory remains with us in our hearts, that alone may serve some day for our salvation.

The Brothers Karamazov (Fyodor, 2015, p. 1272)

Hepper, Ritchie et al. (2012) found in nostalgia studies in Britain and US that nostalgia, like other emotions, has a prototype structure, including several affective features. The prototype structure is a mixture of happiness and loss, in

recalling fondness and memories of the past, content usually related to childhood or intimate relationships, affective features include warmth and sadness (Hepper and Wildschut, et al., 2014). Harvey A Kaplan (1987, p. 466) argues that 'in a psychoanalytic context, the meaning of nostalgia changes to become a variant of depression, an acute yearning for a union with the precedipal mother, a saddening farewell to childhood, a defence against mourning, or a longing for a past forever lost.' In the mid-20th century, psychoanalysts universally acknowledged the significant role of the precedipal mother in the emotional development of those experiencing nostalgia (Kleiner, 1977, p. 17; cited in Sedikides et al., 2015). Nostalgia is described as "a strong longing for union with the precedipal mother, a sentimental farewell to childhood, a defense against mourning, or a yearning for the forever lost past" (H. A. Kaplan, 1987, p. 466). From the moment of birth, infants are threatened by a contradictory nostalgic instinct that compels them to return to a primal human state (Berthold-Bond, 1990). Subconsciously, they desire to return to the womb, perceiving the experience of being oneself as intensely unpleasant. Through nostalgia, one can reclaim the sense of belonging and security once lost. Freud, when discussing nostalgia, viewed it as a longing to return to the womb, with the term also carrying connotations of melancholic regret and unfulfilled desires (Gallop, 2018).

Adolescence may be the phase where individuals first begin to frequently and prominently experience nostalgia, a time when they are irrational, exploring their own identity armed with their understanding of the world and external experiences. Louise J. Kaplan (1984) suggests that the typical depressive moods, grief reactions and states of extreme anxiety that manifest during adolescence are the expression of an internal struggle to both let go of the past and never let go. Nostalgia emerges during this process, and it is the child's first experience of nostalgia for a time gone by and the power of memory. Child psychologist G. Stanley Hall (1904) saw nostalgia as an evolving and progressive psychological state, with the adolescent psyche in a transitional period of gradual maturation, making it particularly susceptible to nostalgia.

1.2 Postmodern Transformations: From Homesickness to Culture

Nostalgia has multiple aspects and many cultural meanings, and there are many debates around it in postmodern theory (Eicher, 2005). Have we prejudged nostalgia? The answer must be yes. The term retro (Latin: back, backwards) goes back to the 1970s, which was full of nostalgia for the rich culture of the 60s, nostalgia for postwar life, and nostalgia for the Edwardian glory days. Metaphysics is the history of existence, and the history of existence is being itself. Postmodern thinkers are often willing to challenge the notion of nostalgia, not simply as a simple longing for the past, but as a complex, multifaceted phenomenon that could manifest itself in many forms. The postmodern debate on nostalgia reveals that this concept is far more nuanced and complex than a simple longing for the past. Nostalgia in a postmodern perspective is characterised by scepticism and critical analysis, questioning the authenticity of longing. In the postmodern world, marked by fragmentation and rapid change, nostalgia could be seen as both a critique of progress and a cultural response to the erosion of historical continuity.

Fred Davis first published Sociology of Nostalgia in 1979, and with the times changed, the nostalgia has now become part of the postmodern condition. Boym (2001) contends that nostalgia is coextensive with modernity itself, as nostalgia is a rebellion against modern ideas of history and progressive time. Nostalgia exiles us from the present and puts us in touch with an imagined past, where a simple, pure, easy and harmonious past is constructed, making it whole, stable, coherent and safe from accidents and betrayal by accidents (Hutcheon and Valdés, 2000). Nostalgia is not about place; it is about time. Rather than being about the past, nostalgia is about the present (Hutcheon and Valdés, 2000). Nostalgia depicts space in time and time in space, hindering the distinction between subject and object (Boym, 2001). Hence the emergence of a classification of nostalgia distinguished through moments of postmodernity, where nostalgia would be divided into modern versions of nostalgia and postmodern nostalgia. The former is practical nostalgia; while the latter is non-temporal nostalgia, which is a nostalgia where the past and the present exist simultaneously, standing outside of time. Unlike modern nostalgia, postmodern nostalgia is more concerned with the

feelings of the masses (Higson, 2014). Modern nostalgia is about longing for the lost past, about wishing for those experiences; in postmodern nostalgia we are at one with the past (Boym, 2001). The ephemeral, irrecoverable and inaccessible nature of the past is what gives nostalgia its emotional impact and appeal; in this case the imagined past, the past idealised through memory and desire (Hutcheon and Valdés, 2000). Mark Shipper (1980) argues that nostalgia betrays us by romanticising the past, allowing us to bring a false, idealised past into the modern era, and that we cannot live in the past and the future simultaneously (cited in Womack and Kapurch, 2016).

Janelle Wilson (1999) assesses nostalgia as a fleeting emotional experience that includes thoughts and actions that connect to the past in a complex retrospective and sad way by reconstructing past circumstances. Christopher Lasch (1991) points out that if we formally view nostalgia as an idealisation of the past, then memories are not exercised, but there is a difference between nostalgia and memory regarding the basis of the connection. Freud's "screen memory" explains how some painful and disturbing memories are replaced and blocked out by others (quoted in Arnold-de-Simine, 2013, p. 83). Freud could not abandon the possibility that the unconscious derives its characteristic power from its role and that all living beings in the world could live in the body and uncover a hidden sense of self (cited in Gordon, 1997, p. x). Nostalgia as the ghost of the unconscious is the subconscious that is preserved in the mind and this information allows us to discover our own inner world (Nuttall, 1968). One individual enters into another in many ways, and this pattern operates across cultures (Frosh, 2013). In Bomb Culture, Nuttall (1968), quoted R.D. Laing's critical observation: Our sanity is not "true" sanity. Their madness is not "true" madness (p. 111). Every ghost that enters the human subject is an untranslatable mental pheromone, and every unconscious impulse could proliferate in the darkness (Laplanche, 1999; Freud, 1915).

Culture is irrational, broadly influenced by art, as opposed to the socio-economic aspect, due to the fact that culture changes in response to the changing spiritual needs of human beings, but socioeconomics is centred on the fixed material

needs of human beings (Nuttall, 1968). The significance of nostalgia in contemporary culture derives from its association with the loss of industrial, urban and capitalist culture, the stability of social traditions and cultural integration throughout the country (Turner, 1987). The acceleration of globalisation encourages stronger national ethnic attachments, and our emotional yearning for something with a collective memory is more intense. But we are prejudiced against nostalgia. Nostalgic melancholia is not only present in the minds of individuals, but also in collective memory (Boym, 2001). Based on social identity theory, Sierra and McQuitty (2007) suggest that these emotional and cognitive responses to the past are based on group membership of the period. Were nostalgic memories chosen to be accurate or idealised? Is the purpose of our nostalgia to be a virtual construction of the past or honest feedback to reality? There is disagreement about whether nostalgia is a universal human experience or a culturally specific phenomenon. Some researchers point to nostalgia as a fundamental aspect of human psychology; conversely, many sociologists believe that nostalgia is shaped by cultural, social and historical factors, which is why it can manifest itself in different contexts with different effects. Nostalgia will be conceptualised locally, it gets constructed in its context according to the social history and evolves with that context (Batcho, 2013).

In the modern era, nostalgia is now often understood by some contemporary cultural commentators as a more general postmodern state, one in which nostalgia is not temporal, but a nostalgia in which the past standing outside of time is simultaneous with the present (Higson, 2013). Fredric Jameson (1991) describes postmodernism as a symptom of our diminished historicity, but we still experience the possibility of history in some positive way. His postmodern nostalgia pointed out that cultural practices arising from nostalgia change over time. Postmodernism proper is characterised by a scepticism towards grand narratives, an emphasis on fragmentation and mimesis, and a concern with the role in constructing reality. Generally, postmodernism tends to be described in terms of 'unmaking', including deconstruction, disintegration, displacement, delegitimisation or dissolution (Brown, 2018). For example, in commodifying

nostalgia, we often re-evaluate, remix, reconfigure, re-position, re-contextualise, re-organise and re-brand certain nostalgic brands (Fjellestad and Engberg, 2013, cited in Brown, 2018). Postmodernists aim to reveal nostalgia's underlying dynamics and social impact by deconstructing nostalgia. We inhabit a media environment characterised by hyperreality, mimicry and repetition, where media representations of the past rely on the appropriation of images from the past, and where this restructuring culture also results in the loss of the true meaning of the past, evoking only a more generic sense of the past (Grainge, 2002). Therefore, nostalgia is dangerous, in using nostalgia as a marketing gimmick we have been identified with a nostalgic memory that may not belong to us. We have been artificially defined with false consciousness, and these socially dominant forces have defined content that makes us passive. But nostalgia is also our defence against outside manipulation, and it is only when we have a real resonance somewhere that we can become the true owners of culture, emotion and memory (Wilson, 2005).

Postmodernism blurs the boundaries between high and low culture, and nostalgia often elevates previously marginalised or dismissed cultural artefacts in works of art (Lasch, 1984, Lowenthal, 1985, cited in Hutcheon and Valdés, 2000, p. 18). The aesthetics of nostalgia is more than simple reminiscence; it is a complex projection of partial, idealised history with partial, idealised history (Hutcheon and Valdés, 2000, p. 20). Nostalgia and irony feature heavily in postmodern aesthetics, but nostalgia is characterised by its devaluation of the present through lovingly recalling the past, while irony makes fun of old content to create new, self-consciously superior content (Hutcheon and Valdés, 2000). The ultimate dialectic arising from postmodern aesthetics is the dialectic of the past as present, and like the media told us, nostalgia became an obsession in popular culture and high art (Lasch, 1984, Lowenthal, 1985, Moriarty and McGann, 1983, cited in Hutcheon and Valdés, 2000). Hegel (1970, p. 31) argues that representations of art are not mere but can have a higher authenticity and presence based on the reality of ordinary life. And there is a similarity between our nostalgic fabrication of what was

once popular culture and the potentially liberating notion of the past that emerges in art (cited in DaSilva and Faught, 1982, p. 57).

Fred Davis (2011) describes an interactionist theory of nostalgia, by definition, the idea of nostalgia and talk of the past is always full of positive effects on beauty, joy, pleasure, contentment, goodness, happiness and love. We find meaning in the present from the past, and we feel that the past in our memories fits into the logic and preconceptions of our narrative. Our memory is dynamic, it changes creatively with the conditions we set in the present and the logic we develop subconsciously, it is an automatic choice (Womack and O'Toole, 2021). The categorisation of past experiences that people actually use in their everyday lives has been found to be more likely to coalesce individually and collectively around particular historical events, whereas simple timelines hardly have this effect (Kotarba, 2002).

Nostalgia is not what it used to be; before, it was a feeling that could only be experienced by talking with people who shared the experience or looking through photographs of the past. Now that time no longer limits nostalgia, this Proustian emotion can make our nostalgia free and casual (Niemeyer, 2014). The power of memory hovers intermittently in our lives and thoughts, it appears unannounced and preys on our thoughts; but these memories are subject to change, to distortion and pallor, and to disappearance in time. Historian Peter Burke (2005) argues that memory is more about what we forget than what we remember (cited in Worcman and Garde-Hansen, 2016). When we remember something, it changes according to the circumstances in which it was recalled or over time (Womack and O'Toole, 2021). This means that nostalgia is a way of participating in and responding to social and cultural change, linking past and present cultural practices and giving people a sense of continuity in their identity (Davis, 1979, cited in Van der Hoeven, 2018, p. 215).

In conclusion, postmodernism has profoundly transformed our understanding of nostalgia, from a personal emotional state rooted in homesickness to a dynamic cultural logic shaped by fragmentation, simulacra, and commercial reproduction. Nostalgia is no longer confined to private memory, and circulates as a mode of cultural production and consumption, deeply embedded in media systems,

aesthetic practices, and identity politics. Nostalgia not only as a symptom of longing, but as a strategic resource within contemporary consumer culture, a theme explored in the following section.

1.3 Nostalgia and Consumer Culture

1.3.1 Defining the Nostalgic Consumer: Characteristics and

Motivations

In times of widespread uncertainty, consumers often look back to the past in search of comfort and stability (Pichierri, 2023). Nostalgia as a commodified style or commodified practice is described by Paul Grainge (2002, p. 28) as the "nostalgia mode", while nostalgia as a feeling or emotion is the "nostalgia mood". The appeal of nostalgic consumption in the market mainly stems from the ability of nostalgia to evoke pleasant memories; nostalgia is by its very nature unforgettable and haunting, creating a strong emotional appeal in the consumption process (Ahlberg, Hietanen and Soila, 2020). The subculture of consumption originates from the desire to identify oneself with particular products. Fredric Jameson (1991) considers nostalgia a way to connect with the past that removes any discomfort issues and is used for manipulative and commercial purposes. No matter how old we are and how fast we embrace technological change, we still crave what we have left behind (Cross, 2015). Regardless of age, people habitually consume the familiar to relieve anxiety, relying on the familiar for the comforts of the past (Lizardi, 2014). We miss our past. In order to satisfy the emotional connected to the past, public and private enterprises have started to restock various crafts that have disappeared, local heritage and history museums have begun to host multiple traditional events (Cross, 2015). Like other phenomena in society, nostalgia ultimately enters the commercialised and commodified marketplace, where things, no matter what they are on the outside, have a monetary value that could be valued by a certain segment of the population (Bauman, 2008).

In Britain, the modern iteration of pop culture shows how nostalgia lead the wave of popularity. From the 60s onwards, old-fashioned styles became a trend, such as the 1966 Cole and Son relaunch of Scottish architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh's designs, which replaced McCall's and Wes Wilson's psychedelic concert posters (Guffey, 2006). One noticeable change in nostalgia in the 1970s was its commercialisation and the new collective ways in which people commemorated it

(Davis, 2011). During this period, the typological changes in the mass media and fashion industries meant that memories could be presented through specific cultural fragments that evoked memories and resonated with tens of thousands of people. Marco Pichierri (2023) emphasises that nostalgia marketing is collective nostalgia provoked through music, film, celebrity, fashion and events from our shared past, which differs from nostalgic nationalism. In the 1990s, the nostalgia driven market became more mature. And this success was primarily because Baby Boomers and the second generation had become middle-aged people of means who were obsessed with recalling their affluent youth and were willing to pay money for it, such as retro sports cars like the Boxster and Beatles music events (Jacobsen, 2020). In Simon Reynolds (2011) study it is noted that we live in an age of madness for retro and that retromania is powerful throughout popular culture and consumer society. In recent research by Oscar Ahlberg, Joel Hietanen and Tuomas Soila (2020), they argue that retro consumption could continue to grow like the field of Hauntology, so that excess consumer desire could be channelled through retro consumption.

Stephen Brown (2018) has further developed Hauntology with emotional perspective and has long been interested in the emotional overload on marketing and consumption. When elements such as ghosts and spectres appeared in his research, and it was a relatively new speculative theory, it attracted some interest in the marketing academic field (Ahlberg, Hietanen and Soila, 2020). Although Derrida's hauntology is associated with Marx, hauntology in the marketplace broadly refers to consumers' attempts to find meaning in the current market (Ahlberg, Hietanen and Soila, 2020). Kate Fisher (2014) sees retro consumption as an uncontrolled attempt by people to add a sense of history to the culture that can evoke historical depth (p. 25). The impulsive desire for nostalgic consumption is seen as a desperate instinct (Ahlberg, Hietanen and Soila, 2020). Our addiction to materialism is mainly due to a paradoxical need to translate the instability of consciousness into the solidity of things (Csikszentmihalyi, 1993).

A significant body of research suggests that nostalgic consumption functions as a psychological defence mechanism against existential insecurity. When individuals

feel uncertain, isolated, or dissatisfied with their present lives, nostalgic products offer emotional relief by evoking familiar memories from the past. Hirsch (1992) argues that such consumption alleviates neurological stress, functioning as a compensatory strategy. Similarly, Hart, Shaver and Goldenberg (2005) demonstrate that nostalgic behaviours can mitigate depressive and anxious states by providing psychological comfort. Zhou et al. (2013) further anchor this tendency in Freudian defence theory, suggesting that nostalgia helps consumers symbolically resist unwanted change and preserve a coherent sense of self.

Now that nostalgia driven market is beginning to diversify, vintage fashion and collectables associated with the past continue to exist, from new steam trains and vintage motorbikes to artfully vintage sales brochures (Higson, 2014). Flea markets, second-hand and vintage shops to more exclusive vintage boutiques, this is an industry that has proliferated in recent decades (Brembeck and Sörum, 2017). There has also been some site reconstruction, like London's Covent Garden or Boston's Faneuil Hall, where old buildings have been repurposed into holiday shopping hotspots. To meet consumer demand, the market has made nostalgia as a significant business and expand a range of elements such as magazines, films, vintage novelty shops, and old-time TV channels. Catering to people's needs, memory makers shape it in ways that increase sales (Cross, 2015). Retro marketing is everywhere, from fridges, kettles, blenders, ovens, toasters and Kitsch kitchen utensils in the everyday of home, to brand collaborations in fashion. People are free to buy the cars, books, musical instruments, sweets, cigarette cards or furniture that interest them, these retro products are at their fingertips. Many consumers satisfy their desire for the past through nostalgic consumption, and businesses are becoming dependent on the benefits of the past (Pascal, Sprott and Muehling, 2002). The predictable audience for nostalgic goods is willing to buy products that commodify the past because the media has repackaged or reformatted content, which greatly reduces the risk for merchants (Lizardi, 2014). The nostalgic concept is one that can be applied to any commodity in the marketplace, as long as elements of the past may be reconfigured and combined. In the 20th century, each generation was defined by the goods it consumed,

particularly clothing and popular culture, and postmodern nostalgia has successfully used these products as substitutes or equivalents for historical times (Newland, 2010). In this market, the past no longer means lost, but recoverable (Higson, 2014). Boym (2001) refers to this content as the souvenir station of the past.

When the objects of nostalgia do not disappear completely from the experience of people's lives, the past reappears and can quickly be deleted, replaced or healed (Higson, 2014). The standard marketplace nostalgia that can be found now generally follows, mimics or recreates past and is reproduced through several specific celebrations, purchases and collections, which are celebratory in nature (Boym, 2007). For example, with the theme of vintage style and nostalgia, the annual British seaside cultural festival: Vintage by The Sea. The inspiration for the festival comes from the aesthetics of the period between the 1920s and 1980s. Programs include live music, dancing, fashion parades, vintage markets and classic car displays.



Figure 13. Vintage by The Sea 2023. Resource: the Instagram thevintagefestival



Figure 14. Vintage by The Sea 2023. Resource: the Instagram thevintagefestival

Fredric Jameson (1991) considers this nostalgic celebration to be the imaginary style of a real past, nostalgia without melancholy. Nostalgia driven market is filled with surprisingly sweet atmosphere. People are no longer obsessed with trying to recover the unattainable contents of the past and the paradox of nostalgia in time fades away (Higson, 2014). The game market no longer needs new games, just old ones for resale; the film industry no longer needs innovative screenplays and original films, just re-mastered, repackaged and re-imagined (Lizardi, 2014). Nostalgic branding became a fixture in the consumer market, e.g. The Beatles, James Bond, and Harry Potter. In the 1960s people were nostalgic with only what was really happening in mind, whereas in the 1970s and 1980s we started to get pure imagery. Fredric Jameson (1991) bemoans the fact that this process of branding nostalgia has become a conscious stylistic placement that has lost the emotional impact of nostalgia, and that this aesthetic style has begun to replace the natural history. Reynolds (2011) writes in his book Retromania: Pop Culture's Addiction to Its Own Past, nostalgia became increasingly associated with popular culture in the second half of the twentieth century and thoroughly entwined with the consumer entertainment complex. This retro culture is an apparent fascination with the culture of the more recent past, with an ample material archive of achievable and precise elements of reminiscence. This retro sensibility is characterised by neither idealising nor sentimentalising the past, but instead seeking to be amused and fascinated by it (Reynolds, 2011). Boym (2001) does not fully acknowledge, or even resist, this claim. She argues that the power of the bourgeois family and social product in the individual makes the familiar frightening and the unfamiliar familiar. It takes us away from our desires and fears and recreates the social life of the family dynamic. The variability and pressures of modern society are not evenly distributed to each individual, and when we are overly subjected to pressure from the outside world, individuality and isolation require us to have experiences to share with others.

As nostalgic consumption has become increasingly embedded in mainstream consumer practices, marketers have begun to refine their approaches to engage with this emotionally charged audience. Beyond passive appeal, nostalgia now

functions as an active tool in branding and advertising, carefully designed to evoke specific temporal affects and shape consumer preferences. The following section explores how nostalgia is operationalised within strategic marketing efforts and the ways in which brands utilise emotional memory to drive engagement and loyalty.

1.3.2 Strategies for Engaging the Nostalgic Consumer

Nostalgia driven marketing strategies have a moderating effect on consumers' choice of nostalgic products (Zhou, et al., 2013). Interpretive consumer researchers and arts marketers have shown interest in nostalgic consumption, which they sometimes refer to as 'retro-freaks' (Brown 2001; Goulding 2001). Through nostalgia, marketers may effectively communicate with consumers, and in a growing number of marketing practices, consumer nostalgia has been found to be an efficient and successful approach (Cui, 2015). Nostalgia marketing is effective for the reason that, "nostalgic marketing campaigns take customers not only back to the past, but to an idealised past that has weeded out the bad stuff of today: drugs, pollution, terrorism, malfeasance and, above all, marketing (Brown, 2004, p. 62)." Or to put it another way, "Nostalgia is a way of relating to the past that edits out any uncomfortable issues and is exploited for manipulative and commercial purposes" (Arnold-de-Simine, 2013). Many companies' market by referencing past eras, such as imitating making products based on old specifications (Rousseau and Venter, 1999). The Volkswagen Beetle released in January 1998, was a milestone in retro products, as it combined the distinctive bubble shape of the old Volkswagen Beetle with the latest automotive technology to become a 'repro-retro', a nostalgia for nostalgia itself (Brown, 1999). Pop and rock music are also steeped in retro fever, becoming mainstream and constantly projecting backwards into historical archives to define the contemporary moment (Reynolds, 2011). In his autobiography, the New York Times journalist David Carr (2008) wrote that stories can be edited in turn each time they are recalled (cited in Devine, 2014). Scott Dacko (2008, p. 457) marks nostalgia marketing as "the adoption of the idea that something old can come back again as something new 'New'."

In research on the theme of nostalgia, advertising researchers Susan L Holak and William J. Havlena (1991) found that advertisers often tap into consumers' vast reminiscence structures by reviving promotions, products and packaging associated with the past. Even though consumers cannot go back in time, they can recreate the past through nostalgic consumption activities (Stern, 1992). Advertisers have also found that idealised views of the past are evoked in consumers in a variety of ways, mostly with positive emotions (Pascal, Sprott and Muehling, 2002). Feelings and sensory stimuli are particularly prominent in the consumption process. Marketers are able to make nostalgic consumption strategies about the present in response to nostalgic emotions (Goulding, 2001). Retro brands often use some memorable stories as a classic marketing strategy, often exploiting pre-existing concepts from consumers' memories related to the brand in the past to create new connections. Nostalgia is beginning to be conceptualised by past consumer experiences and preferences, similar products more trust content with an emotional connection, and the tendency to use 'nostalgic' or 'emotional' brand associations is quite common in communication strategies (Reisberg and Heuer, 1995). With the precondition that it is harder to capture consumer preferences, abandoned brands start to be re-launched (Wansink, 1997). For example, Polaroid cameras, which were bankrupted by competition from digital photography technology, but relaunched in 2017 with an official name change to Polaroid Originals and have been successfully revived by the retro wave on the Instagram platform as well. For the consumer, even though there is a break in the brand's development, the brand is still trustworthy and worth buying because of the relationship it once had (Cattaneo and Guerini, 2012). For example, Burma Shave, the classic shaving cream brand, has returned to the market after a 30-year hiatus (Pascal, Sprott and Muehling, 2002).

The consumer market has now changed the nature of nostalgia itself, with the ready availability of fast entertainment such as popular music, television shows, clothing, and cars making nostalgia less about identification with past communities, ideologies or regimes and more about a fascination with consumer goods that were once present in childhood (Cross, 2017). Morris B. Holbrook and

Robert M. Schindler (1994), in their studies of music, film and fashion, suggest that the styles popularised during adolescence influence consumers' lifelong consumption preferences, and that this effect can lead to strong emotional responses through triggers in future activities, particularly nostalgic attachment to youthful content. Michael S. Roth highlights how nostalgia is rooted in childhood. We can define our childhood through nostalgia (Lizardi, 2014). Some people return to 'home' by collecting childhood toys, dolls, rock songs from their youth or second-hand cars, and these consumer products are often associated not with the location of the visit, but with a certain period of life. Memories of childhood and youth, of purchases, gifts and play, are consumer products that cannot disappear (Cross, 2017). Advertisers hope they could evoke memories of adolescence by referring to the 'good old days', prompting consumers to purchase goods and services associated with the past (Rousseau and Venter, 1999). This marketing strategy is a meaningful construction of once desired content, something from childhood that touches a particular emotional nerve (Cross, 2015). Images reminiscent of childhood and adolescence are the content we are most likely to feel nostalgic about (Goulding, 2001). For example, old style T-shirts, nostalgic snacks, nostalgic animations, games, and films 3D version updates (like: Titanic, 2012) (Cui, 2015). John J. Skowronski and W. Richard Walker et al.'s experiment on The Fading Affect Bias (2014) explained that positive events are more likely to be recalled than negative ones, and that the positive effects of an event tend to continue to act longer than the negative ones. Therefore, in this process, certain negative emotions are cancelled out and the positive parts that remain in the memory are extraordinarily visible. This experimental result can also explain why each generation always feels that the music, films or TV programmes from their adolescence are more excellent and classic, while the works after that tend to be regressive. During the process of consumption, consumers would favour goods that were once present in their adolescence over innovative and very different content that came after, such as General Mills' retro packaging for Cheerios, Cinnamon Toast Crunch, Honey Nut Cheerios, Lucky Charms, Trix, PepsiCo's Nostalgic-Art's Coca-Cola.



Figure 15. PepsiCo's Nostalgic-Art's Coca-Cola. Resource: Website Nostalgic-Art

Simultaneously people feel powerless under modern pressures and need to find meaning and identity in specific goods, a longing that is often rooted in our childhood and at the same time these are difficult to share with others (Cross, 2017). Substances that enter the sensory system react to fluctuations in thought, and it is understandable why nostalgic products have an effect on people's sensory systems (Nuttall, 1968). These products are essentially a product of the combination of these temporally dated stimuli, thus representing long years, and the category of the product is not limited to music or films, almost any product can be an object for people to vent their nostalgic feelings and excite consumers (Schindler and Holbrook, 2003). If one is a Beatles fan or a rock and roll fan at a young age, for example, the mainstream of music in one's future life will be rock and roll, and Beatles-related consumerism will be a particular source of consumer irrationality.



Figure 16. Ford Thunderbird. Resource: Website Nostalgic-Art

Meanwhile the market assigns consumers to different segments based on age groups and subcultures, associated with different nostalgic objects (Pichierri,

2023). For instance, when older consumers see difference generation but similar style Ford Thunderbird on the road, they may be reminded of the times when they were young and travelling with their friends or the car they dreamed of when they were young. This is a marketing strategy to appeal to an aging market by offering mementos of their youth (Stern, 1992). Such products that have a specific emotional appeal to a particular demographic offer marketers an opportunity to take potential customers back in time. Now these popular products are moderating these effects by negotiating the nostalgia gap between individuals (Schindler and Holbrook, 2003). Even though much contemporary nostalgia is briefly built on consumer products that loosely unify narrow age groups, linking otherwise separated individuals together (Cross, 2015). The target age group is also driven to stay within these pre-adult and obsessive constructs (Lizardi, 2014).

Furthermore, the resurrection, revival and reconfiguration of spirits is a common occurrence in marketing scenarios, and retro campaigns featuring long-dead celebrities and similarly dead marketers are among the more practical of nostalgia driven marketing strategies (Brown, 1999). Items that may be associated with a famous figure from the past also give them a cultural value of their own time. The nostalgia urbanisation -Liverpool's Beatles - a city that perfectly illustrates how the Beatles is marketed as a brand, from its urban architecture to its cultural policies. Liverpool picked up and repackaged the Beatles, utilising all of its identities and these radical forces for innovative sequencing. Using the Beatles and Merseybeat legacy as a city brand, cultural heritage circulates through the city as a commodity (Homan, 2006). The reasons for this continued and faithful nostalgia for the band will be analysed and shown in detail in the following chapters through social change and cultural aspects. Experiential pursuits are central in community nostalgia, family nostalgia, fashion nostalgia and modern consumerism (Cross, 2015). Nostalgia driven marketing encourages consumers to stimulate their emotional senses by going back in time, and this experiential approach to marketing makes people's feelings more realistic (Ju, Kim, Chang and Bluck, 2016). Examples include old-time style restaurants, bygone era style advertisements and

icons, this nostalgic experience gives consumers the illusion that the past can be relied upon at any time (Lizardi, 2014).



Figure 17. Museum of Brands (Dawood, 2016, February 12)

Nowadays, nostalgia has become a highly mediated experience, and the Internet has gained massive support as the platform for the display of nostalgic activities, with narratives, images, sounds and videos of the past beginning to circulate for public display (Higson, 2014). Advances in technology have enabled large numbers of geographically distributed people to come together to inspire nostalgia (Hamilton, Edwards, Hammill, Wagner and Wilson, 2014). Social media is likely to help create a strong collective identity, especially for brands that are not as engaging, and it is a great tool and opportunity to build community cohesion (Koetz and Tankersley, 2016). We frequently find content on second-hand websites and forums about getting rid of old things and finding old resources, and there are also some blurred videos and damaged old objects (Cross, 2017). Everything that emerges in media is open to nostalgia, even if the nostalgia is for something that just happened (Lizardi, 2014). Currently, some museums use nostalgia as a core concept in their marketing, such as the Museum of Brands (at 111-117 Lancaster Road in London), which often displays packaging for items from the 60s onwards. Many cultural industry producers produce for the purpose of giving consumers access to nostalgia, although the experience will vary in the process. Some consumers, the audience, will react nostalgically to an intentionally nostalgic product, given what they already know; some consumers will subjectively perceive the product or experience as nostalgic, even if it was not initially designed to be so (Higson, 2014). Now there is a surplus of nostalgia in the global entertainment

industry, with desirable memorabilia available everywhere, especially in Britain and some Western countries, where Vintage shops are everywhere and these items belonging to the past are eagerly displayed alongside the present (Higson, 2014). Fredric Jameson (1991) notes that the nostalgic feel of postmodernism has already started to reduce history to a mere visual style.

In the current digital landscape, nostalgia has transcended its role as a mere emotional response and evolved into a strategic modality of consumer engagement. By commodifying collective memory, brands create a rhythmic interplay between past and present, which can sustain emotional resonance while stimulating commercial desire. This process not only capitalises on affective memory but also reveals deeper structures in postmodern consumer culture where time, identity, and emotion are continually reconstructed through mediated nostalgia.

1.4 The Rhythm of Technological Nostalgia

The impact of media and technology on nostalgia is a subject of considerable debate. At the heart of the relationship between nostalgia and technology is considered by Marc Ruppel (2009) to be a paradox, mainly since we see technology as progressive, contrary to the privileged nature of nostalgia in the past. We always favour things associated with the past, and some technologies have come back to life because of their relationship to the past. The rise of information technology is beginning to make us question the need for postmodern nostalgia, what exactly can exist as the past, and what are the conditions and necessities for the past to exist. Some scholars such as Niemeyer (2014) argues that media and technology have fundamentally changed the nature of nostalgia, enabling new forms of engagement with the past and facilitating the commodification of nostalgic experiences. The personalised use of digital technology has in many ways begun to entangle itself with a past that people have somehow accumulated and arranged (Keightley and Pickering, 2014). Others argue that media and technology have only provided new tools for expressing and experiencing nostalgia, without significantly altering its underlying dynamics. As we look at life through the perspective of technology, we find that we are gradually adapting memory storage patterns to digital products and digital images, fusing old habits from the past into the present and perpetuating them in everyday life (Keightley and Pickering, 2014).

When nostalgia appears in haunting scenes, ghosts begin to record life (Gordon, 1997). Haunting is not morbid content that must be banished, but rather the ghosts that are necessary for ordinary life (Gordon, 1997, p. x). Currently, billions of vintage images are circulating through social media and image sharing sites (Niemeyer, 2014). The past is beginning to become an artefact with concrete outlines and manipulable objects, while technological products (such as mobile phones, iPads, websites) can become media that help evoke certain emotions that transcend time and physical existence (Schwarz, 2009). In today's hypermedia world, technological means make it easy to create our own databases of the past, including the cartoons we watched as children, the video games we played, the

pop music we listened to as adolescents, etc., which can now be readily played back using new technologies (Lizardi, 2014). The proliferation of digital media platforms has made the creation and circulation of nostalgic content possible, allowing individuals to engage with the past in new, often highly curated ways. But it is also this renewal of nostalgic media that confronts us with a more remarkable paradox; nostalgia requires evidence of the past, and it is precisely the mechanical reproduction of past content that plays a massive role in our present nostalgic imagination (Hutcheon and Valdés, 2000). We no longer need to rely on some real personal memory for momentary satisfaction, but can obtain permanent satisfaction (and perhaps become unfulfilled) through an infinite number of visits to the past. The pleasurable sensation of nostalgia experienced by young people comes from the awakening of pleasant memories that act effectively on past consumption, and they can experience the possibility of being a sympathetic participant in the world (Schwarz, 2009). Whether these technological innovations have damaged memory and the extent of their impact has been questioned. Postmodern thinkers have therefore often argued that the rapid pace of social, technological and cultural change has led to a sense of disconnection from the past and can result in a loss of historical continuity. Many critics have lamented the decline of historical memory among the masses, arguing that databases have created cultural amnesia (Hutcheon and Valdés, 2000). We are gradually losing our ability to engage with active memory and entirely depend on databases that can be dispatched at will. In this context, nostalgia may be understood as a response to this perceived loss of historical continuity, as individuals seek to reconnect with a past that seems more stable and consistent than the present.

The leaps and bounds of artificial intelligence (AI) in 2023 make everything that emerges incredible but logical, and we could easily find videos of AI-generated Lennon covers of Oasis' *Wonderwall*, David Bowie's *Space Oddity* and *Yesterday* on YouTube (Guinness, 2023). Paul McCartney announced on the BBC's 'Best of Today' radio show that, with the help of the director of the documentary Get Back, he had used Lennon's voice in upcoming song, probably Lennon's unfinished 1978 love song *Now and Then*. This is 'the final Beatles record', a reunion song. Lennon's

voice was taken from a tape donated by Lennon's widow Yoko Ono, extracted and purified by artificial intelligence, which seems to be the answer to everything related to musical recovery. These examples reflect how digital technology has begun to not only preserve the past but also regenerate it in ways that challenge traditional boundaries between memory, originality and simulation.

The French philosopher of technology Bernard Stiegler argues that people cannot be separated from technology, and that people's consciousness and nature is already technological and we need to accept that we are technical (Bluemink, 2020). Fate and history are considered by Heidegger to be technical in origin (Stiegler, 1998). Human beings are distinguished from animals by their ability to make and use tools, and human culture is based on the fact that we can make tools. All objects can be nostalgic in themselves, and human civilisation could be based on things and the memories they embody, the content of these forms that allow us to exist outside of our lives and for others to see and understand. This is the beginning of the industrialisation of culture. Lev Manovich (2001) considers that the narrative logic of the film or book is being replaced by the non-narrative reasoning of the data algorithm, a world that is like a list of items, but with a database that refuses to be sorted. However, it is also thanks to the creation of databases that the past is beginning to be systematised, acquired more efficiently, and changed more easily. These newspapers, news, and videos from a particular era may serve as the basis for a database, linking time, place, and people together (Ruppel, 2009). Technology is beginning to form a vast network of databases, and the existence of databases is part of a broader shift in nostalgia market developing and becoming more accessible and accurate, putting the past into data form (Manovich, 2001).

Technological means have increased the availability of nostalgic materials today and the expressive nature of nostalgic content has diversified, and Simon Reynolds (2011) argues that there is very little that belongs to the social aspect of this technological consumption and that people get the thrill of solitude. Nostalgia has always been a pastime that belongs to a solitary person, but the diversity of platforms now allows people to enjoy the company of many others (Davis, 2011).

Technology implementation has allowed us to become dependent on media, and we unconsciously focus on a mediated and personalised past (Lizardi, 2014). The past is used as a means to complement present innovations through the presence of the past (Ruppel, 2009). Nostalgia is not customisable but now thanks to new technologies we can act in certain ways to deliberately acquire a sense of nostalgia, which may be referred to as 'self-induced nostalgia' (Niemeyer, 2014, p. 55). The expression of nostalgia or the creation of nostalgic worlds is paradoxical, and new technologies are contradictory. People use fast technology, but want to achieve a slowdown through fast technology. Therefore, the nostalgia is a symptom of progress and crisis intertwined (Niemeyer, 2014). New technologies cannot return subjects to what they were and restore an era, but they can help uncover real past experiences, record it, replicate it or distort it, and fabricate it (Ruppel, 2009). Even so, we unconsciously sift through certain nostalgic content, knowing in our consciousness that we should not do so, but we will abandon some of our insistence in our loss of control, leaving behind a nostalgic history made up of technology, ego and idealization (Niemeyer, 2014; Ruppel, 2009).

1.5 Hauntology and the Spectral Structure of Nostalgia

The entanglement between media, memory, and spectral presence can be traced back to the 18th century, when electricity was first perceived not only as a scientific breakthrough but also as a metaphysical force capable of stirring the soul and expanding consciousness (Sconce, 2000). Since then, death, ghosts and media related to electricity have become closely intertwined. From the 19th century, when sound could remain on earth as a 'ghost', we have gradually grown accustomed to living in a space with phantoms. These media, which can record the sounds and images of the past, begin to become another form of a ghostly presence. This is the process of preserving the spirit, this is the ghost of resurrection. Marshall McLuhan (1964) scholar sees telemedia as an extension of the human nervous system (cited in Sconce, 2000). Electronic media are a kind of spectre in the machine, their operation is a possession of the spectre, and electronics are the gateway to the electronic otherworld. The worlds created by television, radio and computers, are devoid of physicality, with all characters floating in the air through a virtual medium of electronics (Sconce, 2000). Edison's original purpose in designing the phonograph was to preserve the voices of loved ones that could be heard by people who were not yet born, which acted as an embalming agent for sound stripping it from the flesh of the dead (Reynolds, 2011, p. 313). These ghosts of music are specific types of spirits, where the owner of the sound is indeed deceased, but seems to exist again as if we cannot deny that they are still there, but have indeed left. Like photographs and television, this constant pattern of ghostly stays allows us to have a "new body" with some past content. In the 1950s and 60s, when television was first popularised, a slowly fading dot of light would appear in the centre of the screen when it was switched off; similar to a surface noise (crackling) when a record player was running (Fisher, 2014). Such oddities lead some to believe that something unspeakable resides in this, and similar content was disseminated at a time when telephones, radios and computers were commonplace (Sconce, 2000). In postmodern debates, media and technology are often quoted as crucial factors in shaping our experiences of nostalgia. The ubiquity of digital media platforms has made a wealth of nostalgic

material readily available for entertainment, and people's engagement with the past has become a pattern of constant renewal.

Hauntology, coined by Jacques Derrida in Specters of Marx (1994), departs from traditional conceptions of nostalgia by introducing the idea of temporal disjunction, where the past does not simply return but lingers in a ghostly, deferred form that disrupts linear time. The original meaning of haunt is 'to go or bring home' (From Online Etymology Dictionary). And home is philosophically coherent, as Novalis once said 'philosophy is homesickness' (Wright, 2009, p. 40). This is the exact origin of "das Unheimliche" as nostalgia, a term made famous by Freud's book The Uncanny, also Hauntology's predecessor (Fisher, 2014). The German word "das Heimliche" means concealed, hidden, in secret, so its antonym is "das Unheimliche", which means unhomely, where one is troubled by a dwelling with a domestic scene, or where the domestic scene is invaded or disturbed (Freud, 2003; Fisher, 2014). This meaning is similar to the nostalgia of leaving home and homeland for another place, both meaning family scenes being broken up. There are two main ways of thinking about ghosts and haunting, one is to agree that haunting may serve as a foundational process at the root of the human self; while the other way is to acknowledge haunting as a pathology and silent suffering in need of healing (Sadeq, 2015).

Derrida's Hauntology is heavily influenced by the school of psychoanalysts Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok (Fiddler, 2019). The former sees the secret of the haunt as a meaningful opening rather than a deterrent content to be discovered; the latter understands the secret of the haunting as something that allows for an opening that can achieve a small victory of love over death (Torok, 1968, p. 388). In Derrida's (1994) conception, Hauntology is a vague, irreversible, undetermined way of cultural longing, where even if certain elements of history have disappeared, residual matter still hangs in the air. In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida writes, 'the ghost never dies, it always comes and comes back' (Derrida, 1994). When revisits some aspects of the past, the effect may not be one of relief but of increasing distress in our lives, making us more miserable (Brown, 2018). Abraham (1988) points out that hallucinations and delirium are shown and hidden in the

depths of the unconscious, and that ghosts are a way of showing and hiding ambivalence. For example, a significant representation of nostalgia in literature is *Hamlet*, with the character of ghosts as one of the most representative sections. The ghosts that appear in Act VI, Hamlet identifies and banishes them with shameful secrets, which the spectre that inhabits our minds do without having us know it (Abraham, 2009). Suppose it is something we do not know that recurs as an entity. In that case, it may be explained by haunting, which is ephemeral, subtle and marginal, with significant gaps in experience, but which evokes many ineffable things. Art and literature favour these activities because haunting is precious and can be easily destroyed (Frosh, 2013). Haunting has the spring in its nature; when we touch it, we gain some complexity, fading realities, social shadows and insights into ourselves; when it wants to touch us, we realise that we have to do something to try and begin to construct new social areas (Gordon, 1997). As Derrida wrote: "To haunt does not mean to be present, and it is necessary to introduce haunting into the very construction of a concept (Derrida, 1994)."

Artists are addicted to the technologies of television, recording, and records that produce sound, but they are also overwhelmed by melancholy (Zekany, 2014). This melancholy comes from a desire for an older material system, as in the title of Leyland Kirby's album: Sadly, The Future Is No Longer What It Was (Fisher, 2014). British artists are adept at playing with these cultures that belong to the past, particularly willing to mourn a particular period in British history and to sketch a Britain that any American elements have not eroded. These contemporary arts use the equipment and techniques of the past to resurrect certain ghosts in replicas in an attempt to channel the past. Music critic Simon Reynolds (2011, p. 335) reinterpreted hauntology in the field of music based on Derrida's work, describing it as a musical style that intertwines the past and the present (Roberts, 2014, p. 273). The artists look to folklore, vintage electronics, library music and haunted television soundtracks for inspiration (Sexton, 2012). For instance, in Moon Wiring Club, one may hear a British aristocratic voice warning of 'the treacherous elm', while Mordant Music revives the familiar television voice of Philip Elsmore from the 1970s (Reynolds, 2011). And in Belbury Poly's 2005 album The Willows Caermaen,

we can hear the textures of sounds from decades ago. Haunted, an exhibition of photography and video at New York's Guggenheim Museum, defines all recordings from photography, film, video, gramophone and tape as 'ghostly reminders of lost time and elusive memories' (Reynolds, 2011). *The Beatles: Get Back*, a re-release of the Beatles documentary in 2022, uses technology to recreate what they used to practice in the studio, in what could be called a new haunting of the technological kind. This operates as a form of visual stream of consciousness, inviting the viewer's mind and soul into the apparatus itself, thereby satisfying latent fantasies and intensifying the uncanny resonance of ghost media (Sconce, 2000). Peter Jackson has restored over 150 hours of audio from the original *Let It Be* film project using high-end film restoration techniques, preserving the original period palette and allowing the dead members to reappear before they die (Smith, 2021). Derrida describes the presence of these ghosts as an aura of mould and dust (Reynolds, 2011). This approach of drawing inspiration from television, music and video is essentially the materialisation of remembered apparitions (Fisher, 2014).

Hauntology, ultimately, is not merely a reiteration of nostalgia; rather, it reconfigures temporal structures and ontological assumptions. It challenges the modernist ideology of progress by revealing how unresolved pasts continually remerge in spectral form. While some critics have argued that hauntology is nothing more than a rephrasing of nostalgia, its spectral logic has always been situated in the process of multicultural existence and ongoing democratization of restoration.

1.6 Affective Structures and the Logic of Nostalgic Rhythm

There has always been a debate about whether nostalgia should be considered a positive or negative phenomenon. Nostalgia has the potential to act as a force for positive change, and although it is often criticised as regressive and escapist, some postmodern thinkers argue that it can also act as a catalyst for positive change. It is like a double-edged sword. In the Garden of Eden story, nostalgia is regressive due to it reflects a desire to return to an idealized, primordial past. At the same time, this nostalgia carries a utopian impulse, as it projects an idealized vision of the future based on the imagined perfection of the past. These stories allow people to see nostalgia as a defeatist retreat from the present, and as evidence of a loss of faith in the future. Nostalgia is seen as the opposite of progress, as reactionary, sentimental or melancholic, traces of which can be found in the story of the Garden of Eden (Pickering and Keightley, 2006). According to Freud, nostalgia is conceived as the basis of all desire (Boym, 2001, p. 97). According to Lacan (1958), because desire can never be fully articulated in language, its object is rendered fundamentally absent. This inherent gap creates what he terms the "lack-of-being" (manque à être) (Lacan, 2006, p. 575-584). Nostalgia in his view is a way of trying to fill the emptiness of loss and regain the sense of belonging and identity that was once the way, and in his seminar Le transfert (1960-1961) he states that lack is what causes the desire to arise, and that it is existence itself that is desired (Lacan, n.d.). The "lack of being" is considered to be the cause of the existence of desire, and he argues that desire is always directed towards what is lost or missing, and that this desire is never fully satisfied or resolved (Mambrol, 2016).

Hegel's dialectic was designed to explain how contradictions in reality can reach a higher level of unity through a logical process (Hegel, 1977). The evolutionary character of dialectic points to the supernatural element of desire, the need for people's dissatisfaction with the present life and reality to be compensated for by the search for something more important, the first face of desire (Berthold-Bond, 1990). Here desire is positive and evolutionary, shown as Figure 18. "Self-consciousness is desire" is the principle of Hegel's phenomenology of human

consciousness, and in his theoretical system nostalgia is the second type of self-conscious desire. Self-consciousness exists only when it is acknowledged by other parties. The second face of desire is regressive and nostalgic, where the spirit is awakened by reality to strive to return to the peace and tranquillity to which it aspires (Berthold-Bond, 1990). The two faces of desire, one reaching out into the world, striving for all its goals in the world, striving to realise its values, and the other trying to retreat back into the safety of the primitive. Hegel believed that humans have an instinctive desire to become God, which is also our profound nostalgic desire. Nostalgia includes both conservative and progressive attitudes towards the past (Boym, 2001, cited in Van der Hoeven, 2018, p. 215).

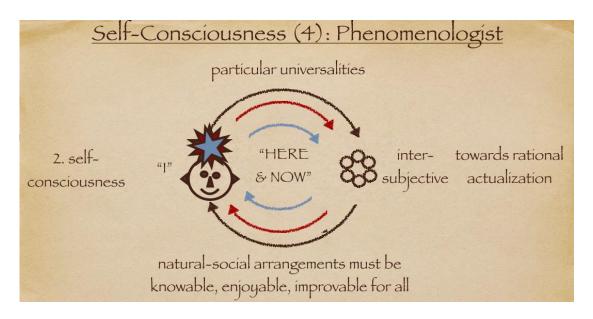


Figure 18. Self-consciousness is desire, towards the ideal-real (Last, 2019)

Nostalgia is ambivalent and cannot be satisfied (Gallop, 2018). Discordant elements are bound to occur in the process of spiritual evolution, and there are bound to be temptations to nostalgia that seek to set our behaviour back and erase the determination to evolve. Freud's theory of the death drive, which is also the destructive instinct, refers to the return to the stillness of the inorganic world through universal endeavour (Freud, 1961). If unfulfilled in its longing for the past, nostalgia becomes a pathology akin to depression or mourning, and as a self-protective mechanism, the subject retreats into a half-life, half-death ontological state. But also due to this, the subject's development is limited and temporal rupture occurs, unable to assimilate into the self this content that has been lost

(Akhtar, 1999). Similarly, nostalgia is an act of healing that attempts to restore the innocence lost on the evolutionary path and heal the wounds suffered. The evolution of desire leads to the destruction of every fulfilment and happy achievement, and so embedded in the process of evolution is the anxiety and fear of failure, which is unhappy. It is like the age and experience with which we have to grow. We long and sink into the beds of contentment, and this longing of ours is the face of nostalgia which is inevitable in the process of spiritual evolution, which is also the face of the death instinct (Werman, 1977).

Nostalgia is free and random. When we have no control over nostalgia and allow it to change as society evolves and social events drive it, the creativity of nostalgia is limitless. There is also no way for us to anticipate the factors that will cause the world to change as a result of the next wave of culture. Just like we never thought we'd want to stop being without our phones one day (of course we sometimes do, but fear it was happening). We fear the world that nostalgia would create, but we cannot help but need and desire to commit to such a world; such is the paradoxical nature of human beings that they can never cling to one state. Nostalgia seduces us with its fundamental ambivalence. Poet Susan Stewart (1985) wrote that nostalgia is a repetition that mourns the inauthenticity of all repetition and denies the ability of repetition to define identity (quoted in Boym, 2001, p. 20). Hegel (1807) told us that nature is only a starting point, that the free spirit is a responsibility and that humans need to realise themselves through action (cited in Berthold-Bond, 1990, p. 379). The innocence of Eden as the harmony of nature is eroded and destroyed by the temptation of desire, and humans begin the hard work of achieving a second harmony. In nature's emergence desire manifests itself in two ways; when desire destroys the natural state of innocence, there follows a nostalgic desire to restore it. The restoration of the natural, innocent and harmonious state that existed before the fall is the redemption of desire; the path into further consciousness awakening, towards education and culture, is the evolutionary nature of man. The two states constantly struggle, with doubt and despair as allies of nostalgia committed to restoring wholeness by destroying its vitality against all odds (Berthold-Bond, 1990, p. 381).

Chapter 2: Methodology

2.1 Methodological Approach and Explanation

This research adopts a literature-based research method rooted in the interpretivist and hermeneutic traditions. Qualitative descriptions in literary materials rarely reveal the variable relationships among research objects, necessitating researchers to explore logical relationships between objects through logical reasoning, which involves classifying the information contained in the literature, selecting typical examples for reorganization, and drawing conclusions based on this process (Lin, 2009). Unlike empirical research based on field investigations or statistical data, literature-based methodologies place greater emphasis on the close reading, interpretation, and synthesis of existing texts, treating texts both as data and as analytical methods (Booth, Colomb and Williams, 2008; Snyder, 2019). In this thesis, this dual nature allows nostalgia to be traced not only through conceptual theory but also explored through specific cases related to the Beatles' legacy.

Literature-based methodology is a qualitative text analysis method that includes detailed reading, intertextual comparison, and thematic synthesis. This enables the identification of patterns, contradictions, and resonances within and between texts. When reviewing literature, philosophical review is required, which necessitates the analysis and reorganisation of ideas in the literature (Hart, 1998). The distinction between literature-based methodology and other methods lies in the fact that it does not directly engage with the research object but instead indirectly extracts information from various literature sources, constituting a noncontact approach (Lin, 2009). According to Randolph (2009) systematic review of the literature, he emphasized that literature-based methodology is not only used for theoretical framework construction, but also suitable for proposing new concepts and insights. As a purely literature-based research method, researchers systematically collect and critically read published literature and cultural texts to construct new theoretical interpretations (Snyder, 2019). When these documents

from different fields exert influence, they can be understood as research on a part of a field (Prior, 2002). When people attempt to link many studies on different topics together, regardless of the purpose of the linkage, it is valuable (Baumeister and Leary, 1997). Hart (1998) summarises literature-based research as the use of existing literature and secondary data to explore, test, or develop theoretical or conceptual frameworks. Literature-based methodology effectively lays a solid foundation for advancing knowledge and promoting theoretical development (Webster and Watson, 2002, cited in Snyder, 2019). It enables researchers to trace the emergence, evolution, and interconnections of specific ideologies across different texts and historical contexts. This is particularly important in cultural studies, as meaning is not always empirically observable and must be interpreted through symbols, discourse, and symbolic practices (Hall, 1997; Geertz, 1973).

In Bowen (2009)'s application of document analysis in cultural research, it is pointed out that this method is suitable for research that cannot be directly contacted with empirical objects but needs to understand its historical significance. This method is suitable when the research objective is not some measurable data but rather a phenomenon that can be explained. My research subject is nostalgia, aiming to understand how concepts such as nostalgia operate within discursive, emotional, and historical frameworks. This aligns with interpretive epistemology, as argued by Schwandt (1994), who states that social reality is constructed through language, culture, and symbolic interactions. Within this framework, literature is not merely background but also the ghostly record of social reality, shaping and reflecting human understanding and emotional experiences.

A distinctive feature of literature-based methodology is integration, which involves establishing connections between ideas, theories, and experiences (Wallace and Wray, 2016). By integrating findings and perspectives from numerous empirical studies, literature-based methodology possesses a strength unmatched by individual studies in addressing research questions (Snyder, 2019). This approach allows a method or methodology to be applied from one field to another: placing

an event within a larger theoretical framework to provide a new perspective on the phenomenon. This means that research can draw elements from different theories to propose new insights or theoretical frameworks, or to develop existing theories further (Hart, 1998, p. 8). This fits with my research objectives and plan: Integrating fragmented but interconnected knowledge domains to construct a coherent understanding of complex cultural phenomena. Specifically, exploring the nostalgic and ghostly legacy left by the Beatles against the backdrop of Liverpool's evolving identity.

The forms of evidence I examined include literature on Liverpool's post-industrial transformation, subcultural and countercultural theory, affective memory studies, Beatles periodography, and visual-musical analysis. I was able to trace how Beatles' images and cultural ghosts continue to shape and be shaped by wider narratives of time, culture and regeneration. The selection of literature and cultural materials was guided by a thematic and conceptual logic. Rather than relying solely on canonical texts or disciplinary boundaries, I adopted an inclusive approach that allowed for the juxtaposition of diverse voices, temporalities, and forms. Texts were selected based on their capacity to speak to the central questions of temporal disjunction, mediated memory, and affective resonance, which these criteria emerged inductively during the reading process. The purpose of my research methodology is not to capture the truth of experience, but to construct an interpretive framework, one that considers both emotional texture and theoretical depth. This research does not seek quantitative measurements or generalizable claims, but rather explores how cultural meanings are constructed, remembered, and repurposed in ways that resonate deeply with social imaginaries and personal identities. This methodological openness allowed the project to move between primary and secondary texts, between theory and artefact, enabling a dialogue between cultural memory and critical reflection. By placing philosophical reflections on nostalgia (e.g., Boym, Derrida) alongside local histories of Liverpool and analyses of visual media, I was able to construct a multiperspectival framework for interpreting the spectral presence of the Beatles in contemporary culture.

This interpretive approach also recognises that nostalgia is not a fixed object of study, but rather a dynamic and often contradictory emotion that requires careful and layered research. By bringing together a variety of sources and close readings, I seek to reveal the modes of operation and tensions of nostalgia, sometimes as a regressive yearning for a lost past, sometimes as a utopian impulse for a better future. This approach allows me to present a layered analysis of the ghostly, emotional, and symbolic meanings of the Beatles' legacy as it is transmitted.

2.2 Research Design and Case Selection

Case studies are an empirical method used to conduct in-depth investigations into phenomena (cases) and their real-world contexts, particularly when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context may not be clearly defined (Yin, 2018). Gerring (2004) defines case studies as follows: From a methodological perspective, case studies are best defined as in-depth investigations of a single case (a relatively limited phenomenon) (p. 341). In this context, "case" refers to an event, an entity, an individual, or even an analytical unit (Yin, 1989, quoted in Noor, 2008, p. 1602). Robert Stake (1998) notes that the key to case studies lies not in the investigative method but in the interest in the research subject (cited in Johansson, 2007, p. 2). As an in-depth and multidimensional research method, case studies enable researchers to explore the complexity of cultural, social, and emotional dimensions within specific contexts. Like historical research, case studies typically focus on a specific case while also considering its context, thereby encompassing numerous variables and characteristics (Johansson, 2007). Case studies have no fixed formula, but the choice of research questions determines the significance of the study, especially when the questions aim to explain contemporary situations or social phenomena— "how" or "why" they occur (Yin, 2018).

A key methodological rationale underpinning this research is its adoption of a theory-driven case study approach. As George and Bennett (2005) argue, theory-oriented case studies are designed not to generalise statistically but to explore and refine theoretical constructs by applying them to carefully chosen contexts where their manifestations are especially rich or revealing. In this case, Liverpool provides not only a historically resonant setting for the Beatles' legacy but also a rich background which competing temporalities, emotional economies, and cultural memory converge. Selecting a single, information-rich case study allows for an exploration of the intersection between place, memory, and cultural production. Professor Bent Flyvbjerg (2006) points out that case studies are often misunderstood as lacking universality, but the strength of this method lies in its

ability to provide detailed insights and theoretical depth. Case studies utilize multiple data sources to explore a phenomenon, ensuring that the exploration of the issue is not limited to a single perspective but encompasses multiple perspectives (Baxter and Jack, 2008).

The study is based on cultural and historical analysis and employs a case-oriented interpretive design. The central aim of the research is to trace how nostalgia manifests itself in contemporary British cultural memory in the form of emotion, symbolism and hauntology, using the Beatles as a centralized perspective. In this sense, the research design was structured not through data collection, but through a sustained engagement with socio-cultural contexts and states, theoretical writings, historical documents, and visual and sonic materials.

By focusing on a single, information-rich case, this research aligns with Flyvbjerg (2006) argument that strategically selected cases can yield greater insights than large datasets, especially when the aim is to understand complex cultural logics rather than to measure frequency. The Beatles' presence in Liverpool is not treated as a fixed empirical fact but as a symbolically charged node through which broader theoretical questions about nostalgia, affect, and memory can be interrogated. This allows the case to function as both an empirical illustration and a theoretical testing.

The Beatles in Liverpool were chosen as a case study because they represent a unique intersection of local identity and global cultural symbolism. On the one hand, the Beatles were more than just a band: they were a cultural phenomenon whose legacy transcends eras, technologies and geopolitical contexts. On the other hand, Liverpool provides a base of cultural memory as the birthplace of the Beatles, a location that has been substantially transformed by its association with the Beatles. As a post-industrial city, Liverpool has undergone a major transformation, with the Beatles serving not only as a symbol of heritage, but also as a promoter of economic and symbolic regeneration. The Beatles' presence is embedded in the city's architecture, tourism, commemoration and cultural identity. This dual embeddedness-both global reputation and local roots-makes

Liverpool a highly creative site for examining how nostalgia is constructed, spatialized and mediated.

More importantly, the Beatles are the full embodiment of the 'rhythm of nostalgia', a cyclical, reactivated form of longing that is continually resurrected through reissues, remixes, documentaries, fan practices and public memory projects. From the peak of Beatlemania in the 1960s to the digitally remastered versions of the band in the 21st century, their legacy exemplifies the ways in which media technologies sustain and amplify nostalgia. This temporal elasticity (the constant presence of the past) is closely related to theories of hauntology, in which traces of lost futures and unresolved pasts linger in cultural production.

Therefore, this case study is not only illustrative, but also theoretically strategic. It explores the multiple temporal and spatial intersections of history, ghosts, and emotions, and highlights how cultural memory is formed through material artifacts and imagined continuities. The study draws on a wide range of materials, including archival texts, youth culture records, visual representations, audio recordings, cultural histories, and more recent remedies such as the documentary *Beatles: Get Back.* These materials are not evidence in the positivist sense, but as cultural artifacts through which the layered logic of nostalgia can be deciphered.

Thus, the rationale for choosing this case is double. First, the Beatles provide an exemplar of how nostalgia transcends media, memory, and emotion, transcending mere sentiment to become a dynamic, structuring force in popular culture.

Secondly, the Beatles' enduring legacy in Liverpool allows us to read how memory is embedded in place, economy and everyday life from a spatial and embodied perspective. Together, these factors contribute to a broader theoretical intervention: a reconceptualization of nostalgia as a cultural logic that reconfigures the meaning of time, identity, and the present, rather than a backward-looking escapism.

2.3 Categories of Sources and Textual Material

The interpretive nature of this thesis rests heavily on the selection and integration of diverse categories of textual and cultural materials, each chosen for its relevance to the study of nostalgia, memory, and cultural regeneration. Rather than relying on a singular corpus, the study synthesises multiple strands of literature and cultural evidence to trace how the Beatles' legacy operates as a site of nostalgia across time, memory, and media. These materials encompass academic texts, policy documents, music and visual artefacts, heritage narratives, and archival content. Each category of sources corresponds to specific thematic emphases within the case study.

The first category consists of historical accounts of postwar Britain. A central body of material examines the socio-historical context of postwar Britain, focusing particularly on the period from the late 1940s to the early 1960s. This includes official reports, sociological analyses, and historical accounts that document the decline of empire, postwar reconstruction, and shifting class identities. These texts help frame the emergence of cultural anxiety and the yearning for stability that would later inform a wave of nostalgic sentiment. The broader transformations in British society, such as changing gender norms, urban redevelopment, and mass migration, which are critical for understanding the cultural mood that preceded the Beatles' rise.

Building on this historical foundation, a second category of sources concentrates on the emergence of youth culture in the 1960s, commonly referred to as the era of the "Swinging Sixties." These materials include subcultural theory, youth identity studies, and media analysis. Key themes such as rebellion, consumerism, and the formation of new gender and class identities are explored, particularly through the perspective of how the Beatles functioned not merely as entertainers, but as mediators and amplifiers of generational change. Materials in this category include contemporaneous magazines, style guides, music reviews, and later theoretical interpretations of 1960s counterculture.

The third category focuses on texts and artefacts related directly to the Beatles as cultural and social catalysts, including music criticism, band biographies, fan recollections, documentaries, and visual material such as album artwork and promotional ephemera. Fan-produced memorabilia and reproduced visuals, whether bootleg posters or curated museum vitrines all act as affective base points that stabilise ephemeral memories within tangible forms. These artefacts not only reflect historical moments but serve as active conduits for emotional investment and collective imagination. These materials include cultural biographies and sociological studies that position the Beatles as a broader catalyst for social and cultural transformation. My focus is on texts that trace the band's evolving symbolic meaning, from their role in redefining masculinity and working-class aspiration to their impact on international cultural flows. These materials combine music criticism, popular memory, and studies of celebrity culture to illustrate how the Beatles became both agents and artefacts of cultural change. At the same time, these materials are treated not only as historical evidence but as symbolic and affective objects through which multiple forms of nostalgia and memorialisation are constructed.

The fourth category covers heritage studies and documents that deal specifically with the themes of memory, nostalgia and preservation. These materials help show how the Beatles have been curated, commemorated, and commodified in various forms, such as memorial plaques, museum exhibits, anniversary documentaries, and even pilgrimage tourism. They help reveal how the Beatles' legacy has been institutionalised and commodified through practices of preservation, exhibition, and replication.

Finally, the final category concerns urban cultural policy, regeneration discourses, and heritage branding. A substantial portion of the source base addresses

Liverpool's contemporary efforts to reposition itself culturally and economically through strategic reference to its Beatles heritage. This includes local policy documents, tourism strategy reports, urban redevelopment plans, and cultural branding case studies. They provide insight into how Liverpool's identity has been

strategically reimagined in the post-industrial era through the symbolic capital of the Beatles, transforming the band from a musical phenomenon into a vehicle for tourism, urban renewal, and civic pride. Rather than using Liverpool as a static backdrop, these materials are interpreted as showing how the city itself becomes a co-constructed whole, an evolving cultural landscape in which nostalgia is not only recalled, but actively produced and managed to serve local and global audiences.

Collectively, these categories form a layered textual archive and each type of material contributes to a different facet of the research inquiry, allowing me to trace the affective, symbolic, and political dimensions of nostalgia as expressed through the enduring legacy of the Beatles.

2.4 Interpretive and Thematic Analysis

The analytical approach adopted in this research is interpretive and thematic, grounded in close textual reading, intertextual resonance, and conceptual patterning across the selected sources. Rather than employing a predefined coding frame or a grounded theory model, this thesis embraces a dynamic and reflexive process of synthesis. The aim is to trace patterns of meaning, emotional logic, and symbolic association that reveal how nostalgia operates as a cultural force in and through the legacy of the Beatles.

The analysis begins with the careful reading and annotation of each source, attending to the affective, rhetorical, and visual cues embedded within. For example, postwar policy reports are not treated merely as historical documents but as indicators of cultural mood and collective anxiety. Similarly, Beatles-related media ranging from interviews and biographies to album artwork and documentaries, which are interpreted not only as aesthetic outputs but as socially embedded texts that shape and respond to evolving nostalgic desires.

Through this process, recurring themes and affective structures were identified across materials. These include the persistence of postwar melancholia, the utopian impulse embedded in 1960s countercultural memory, the commodification of nostalgia in heritage discourse, and the spectral recurrence of the Beatles in contemporary urban branding. These themes were not imposed beforehand but emerged inductively through sustained engagement with the material. In other words, the analytical strategy did not aim to categorise content but to uncover affective rhythms, cultural tensions, and symbolic loops that traverse different temporalities and media forms.

In developing this strategy, I draw on the theoretical insights of John Frow and Meaghan Morris (1993), who argue that cultural value is neither inherent nor fixed, but socially constructed, historically contingent, and subject to constant negotiation. What counts as culturally valuable in one context may be disregarded or devalued in another. This view supports the thesis's emphasis on how the

Beatles' cultural meaning is not static but produced and reproduced across various historical, institutional, and emotional registers. Their legacy, mediated through archives, remastered soundtracks, tourist infrastructures, and digital reanimations, illustrates how symbolic value is continually re-evaluated in response to shifting cultural needs.

Equally influential is Reynolds' (2011) concept of temporal layering in retro culture. Rather than treating nostalgia as a singular return to the past, Reynolds describes how cultural memory in postmodernity operates through a dense layering of temporalities. Artworks from different eras are recontextualised, remixed, and emotionally reactivated. This idea allows the thesis to account for the complex ways in which Beatles nostalgia circulates. It is not simply as a longing for the 1960s, but as an evolving and recursive set of aesthetic, emotional, and symbolic gestures shaped by both past and present conditions.

Importantly, these themes are not understood as discrete units but as overlapping and recursive fields of cultural meaning. This approach draws inspiration from cultural studies and affect theory, particularly the idea that meaning emerges not solely from textual content but from circulation, context, and reception (Hall, et al., 2024; Ahmed, 2013). Stuart Hall's insight that meaning is not fixed in the object but constructed through representation (Hall et al., 2024), aligns with this research focus on how the Beatles' legacy is narrativised and mediated through curated spaces and memory discourse. Similarly, Ahmed (2013) theory of affective economies, which frames emotions as circulating rather than residing in subjects or objects, enables a reading of nostalgia not as a fixed feeling but as a cultural motion invested in specific imaginaries and artifacts. For example, the nostalgic framing of the Beatles in museum displays cannot be separated from broader discourses of national heritage, emotional economy, and post-industrial identity reconstruction.

In integrating these themes, the research also draws on hauntology theory and the metaphor of spectral return as a conceptual framework. The Beatles, as historical agents and mythical figures, are interpreted as ghosts, constructing emotional

attachments and unfulfilled promises from the past. This analytical perspective enables the thesis to transcend static representations and enter the realm of temporal separation, emotional delay, and cultural repetition.

Ultimately, the research process is comprehensively presented in Chapters 3 to 5, where empirical materials are not used to prove hypotheses but to reveal how nostalgia functions as an emotion, cultural logic, and social practice, and how it shapes our relationship with history, identity, and imagination. This analytical strategy achieves a nuanced understanding of the Beatles' legacy as a vibrant, evolving, and haunted culture by integrating diverse textual materials with theoretical insights.

2.5 Limitations and Methodological Reflections

Although literature-based methodologies have advantages in terms of conceptual and interpretative depth, this method is not without its limitations. First, literature-based methodologies inherently have epistemological limitations. The process of interpreting texts, images, and historical narratives inevitably involves subjective judgements and the researcher's perspective. My own interpretive framework, influenced by prior research in nostalgia theory, hauntology, and cultural memory studies, inevitably shapes the reading process, determining what is deemed relevant and meaningful. As Donna Haraway (1988) reminds us, all knowledge is situated; the production and use of knowledge must consider its context, position, and impact, rather than pursuing a universality or absoluteness detached from reality (p. 589). Despite the researcher's efforts to maintain a reflective and critical distance, subjectivity in the interpretation process is difficult to completely eliminate.

Secondly, the spatial and historical specificity of the selected case studies also limits their universality. The relationship between the Beatles and Liverpool's identity is unique, as are the history of the city of Liverpool and the British context. Few other cities have so thoroughly integrated cultural memory, city branding and economic regeneration with the legacy of a single musical group. Although the theory I have developed may have broader applicability, the empirical application of the case remains constrained by its specific context. Therefore, when extending research findings to other contexts, it is essential to carefully consider their unique historical, cultural, and political conditions.

Chapter 3: Case Study: Presentation of empirical evidence

To explore how nostalgia operates across temporal, affective, and symbolic registers, this chapter presents the empirical evidence drawn from the case study of the Beatles in Liverpool. Building on the methodological framework outlined in Chapter 2, the analysis now moves into the specific historical, cultural, and media contexts that allow for a deeper understanding of the Beatles' enduring presence within British cultural memory.

Rather than treating the Beatles as isolated musical figures, this chapter situates them within a wider socio-historical background, showing how their legacy is continually reactivated and reinterpreted. The structure of the chapter 3 reflects this layered approach: beginning with the broader postwar shifts that shaped Britain's cultural landscape, it then turns to the emergence of youth identity and countercultural energy in the 1960s. From there, the focus narrows onto the Beatles themselves as agents of cultural transformation, before expanding again to examine the processes of memory-making, preservation, and commodification. The final section addresses Liverpool's strategic deployment of the Beatles as a tool for urban regeneration and cultural branding, which reveals how nostalgia is not only a private emotion but also a public strategy embedded in policy, heritage, and civic identity.

3.1 Postwar Britain and the Emergence of Cultural Shifts

3.1.1 Social Transformations and Cultural Shifts

In order to understand the cultural ground from which the Beatles emerged, it is essential to begin with the postwar British national mood. The devastation of war, coupled with the slow pace of recovery, generated a pervasive sense of fatigue, disillusionment, and cultural stagnation. The economic hardship, imperial withdrawal, and urban transformation shaped a collective yearning for both continuity and renewal and nostalgia began.

From the end of World War I, a host of new ideas, technologies and artistic styles were introduced into people's lives, such as electricity, automation, film, jazz, radio, air travel and rock and roll (Wald, 2011). The 1929 general election, which gave young women the right to vote for the first time, marked the first real mass democracy in Britain, with over 32 million people having the right to vote. The new society took shape and many elements and rules began to be transformed. By 1938, the Paid Holidays Act gave workers a big victory, manual workers started to own their own homes or have mortgages and unemployment began to fall (Burnett, 1986). At the war's end, a new emotional structure based on expectations had emerged, with the expectation that the state would be based on planning, welfare and greater equality, and that society could be free from unemployment and avoidable disease (Williamson, 1988). Young people in working-class households began to have new forms of leisure and young people began to enjoy more holidays, working in factories during the day to produce and in their leisure time watching the latest Hollywood film hit at the cinema, dancing in dance halls or staying in concert halls and theatres (Todd, 2014). But some older people and those living outside the city continued to struggle with poverty and were unaffected by new consumption and leisure forms. Even for those living in large cities, there was much instability in their comfortable lives, with many families relying heavily on their children's wages to sustain their new consumption habits (Todd, 2014). By the end of the 1930s, employers and the government had removed the new right to paid holidays due to the war. To fill their disappointment and anxiety, people began

spending nights in dance halls, watching midnight films and settling their homes in the suburbs (Todd, 2014).

Classes are constructed in economic, political and social life. David Downes (1966, cited in Tanner, 1978) argues that class consciousness in Britain is traditional and has been shown throughout history, for example most people in Britain could distinguish another person's class origins and education by their accent. Mildred Blaxter (1990) and Richard G. Wilkinson (2022) often portray Britain as a society divided by class differences in lifestyle and politics. These differences were confined to politics and areas such as health, education, wealth and income, although naturally these inequalities translate into subjective consciousness between classes (cited in Wilkinson, 2022). Despite the changes of the war era, Britain remained a markedly unequal society, with entrenched attitudes and values that had not been fundamentally altered by the war, nor by the material improvements in living standards of the 1950s (Crossman and Morgan, 1981). Class gradually became one of the factors that eroded the social fabric in the postwar period, and education became a minimally biased route to status (Hall and Jefferson, 2006). British education had not undergone any significant reform since 1918 and, particularly before 1939, only the wealthy or those from middle-class backgrounds were eligible to attend school (except in Wales). Hence, the proportion of students in university or other higher education was tiny by international standards (Morgan, 2021). Young children worked in factories, shops and offices in order to give their families and themselves a better life (Todd, 2014). In addition, because many parents cannot afford to provide educational conditions and they had already developed the habit of being rooted in their communities, only a very small percentage of adolescents achieved success through education (Hall and Jefferson, 2006). Adolescents were not removed from the class stratification system by living in specific communities, and class inequality gradually penetrated into the everyday as time progressed (Murdock and McCron, 1976).

Regarding the youth, many children from working-class families do not have high expectations of school and stay away from it, while most of them work in poorly paid and uncreative occupations due to their lack of education (Brake, 2013). For example, the Teddy Boys (a youth subculture in 1950s Britain, known for often wearing distinctive Edwardian-era clothing and rebelling against social norms), could not become white-collar workers or apprentices in skilled trades due to their lack of technical background and grammar school education. So they attempted to hide their nearly zero skills jobs and lack of access to entertainment with a neat upper-class clothing (Hall and Jefferson, 2006). Despite their lack of educational experience, these teenagers did not give up on creating vitality and spiritual joy in their lives. At this time many uneducated teenagers were gaining a following and money through special entertainment activities like forming bands. There were also singers, songwriters, fashion designers. who had not experienced professional study or work who could somehow succeed easily. Hence Barry Sugarman claim that youth culture was the new opium for youth, and youth mistakenly believed that anyone could achieve success easily (Sugarman, 1967, p. 160). James S. Coleman argued that education was a necessary social experience for adolescents, and a social system for adolescents based on secondary education was proposed (Coleman, 1961).

The Butler Education Act was a social landmark of the era, with the new Education Act restructuring the British secondary school system. Before the publication of the Education Act, gender bias affected the proportional distribution of education and it was often assumed that boys needed education more than girls (Todd, 2005). The 1944 Education Act began a social correction of prejudice, and the general public began to accept that boys and girls needed to be educated equally, and that all young people could be educated up to the ages of 14 and 15 and had the right to attend university (Morgan, 2021; Todd, 2005).

Public schools in Britain are a group of long-established, expensive and exclusive fee-paying independent secondary schools that continued to provide education for upper-class children, even after the education reforms. But many schools

began to offer scholarships and bursaries to academically gifted students from less affluent families. Comprehensive schools, grammar schools, and secondary modern schools, as state-funded schools serving different roles and populations and do not charge any fees, whether or not the family is well off. Educational reform as a means of postwar reconstruction and the spread of national welfare began to expand on the educated classes. Many would choose to go to university when they had the conditions to do so and to become middle class and cosmopolitan, and the youth who received scholarships began to come from the working-class or lower middle class, which seemed more equitable (Anon, 1968; Turner, 2005).

The Education Act has generally increased widespread literacy and sociooccupational mobility in society, and education has been made available to children from all working-class families (Morgan, 2021). Although many young people from working-class families attended grammar schools, not all could adapt to the academic environment. Some students do not fit into an academic atmosphere and prefer to share and exchange new knowledge about music, fashion, film and books at school, and this is where art schools provide the opportunity to provide a venue for experimentation in the arts (Womack, 2009). The innovative changes in art institutions were the clear advantage of the Education Act (Marwick, 2011). It could also be argued that grammar schools and art colleges were informal incubators of youth culture (Womack, 2009). Prior to this, art schools were in the hands of former colonial residents and public school students, and this lack of freedom was influenced and changed by the establishment of the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) in 1947. ICA was founded by artists and critics Roland Penrose, Herbert Read, Cornish poet and editor Geoffrey Grigson, along with the two sponsors created, and it was initially intended to be an alternative art centre to the Royal Academy (Miles, 2010). In addition to the ICA, cultural institutions ranging from the Royal Opera House and the Edinburgh Festival to regional theatre and opera were rebuilt individually (Davies and Sinfield, 2013). The aim of education at art colleges was not to change class, but to be exposed to the

modernist tradition and to relate modernism to one's own background and experience (Anon, 1968).

Mike Savage (2000) argues that culture is not a self-conscious principle of social identity in terms of class, and that people are not aware of the structure and importance of class to their lives. In both its structural and cultural aspects, modern Britain is a society shaped by class rather than other forms of social division (Evans, 1992). World War I facilitated the development of class relations in Britain and workers gained new political rights, but unemployment rose after the war and peaked in 1921, including tens of thousands of uninsured workers, particularly miners, steelworkers and construction workers (Todd, 2009; Mitchell and Mitchell, 1988; Routh. 1980). This lack of loyalty exacerbated class antagonism as most workers became willing to accept alternative work, such as factory, shop and office work. Todd F. Davis (2009) attributed this behaviour to a growing lower middle class that aspired to hold economic power in an economically affluent society. For the general working-class, the postwar period was the beginning of a new life, and state welfare policies increased workers' security of job security and the ability to have jobs in a way they had not before (Todd, 2014). After World War II, British society generally prospered and most working-class people were introduced to consumer goods such as cars, which had previously been reserved for the middle class (Epstein, 1962). Middle-class families started to own televisions (Glancy, 2019).

In the 1945 general election, the Labour Party won due to its commitment to full employment and the welfare state (Todd, 2014). The government began to promote welfare assistance and full employment, while workers gained political and economic rights and greater security during the war, shown in Figure 19 (Todd, 2014). The sharp improvement in living conditions for most of the working-class saw the proportion of wage earners rise by around 10% with the average wage increasing by 95% while the cost of living increased by only 75%, while the average working week was reduced to 48 hours, which meant more leisure time (Melman, 1988). Affluence and social consensus rapidly contributed to the

'bourgeoisification' of the working-class, producing new social types, new social arrangements and values (Hall and Jefferson, 2006). Historian Ross Mckibbin (1998) describes the new middle class as more Americanised, more mobile and with little reliance on older class cultures (quoted in Glancy, 2019, p. 51). Members of this 'new middle class' owned their own homes, had significant disposable income, but were not dependent on traditional institutions due to their low social status (Glancy, 2019, p. 51). Kenneth O. Morgan (2021) notes that World War I produced an official commitment to restoring traditional values and ideas, while World War II narrowed the gap between aspiration and reality. The postwar period is often described as a 'Class Compromise' or 'Social Compact' (Umney, 2018, p. 41).



Figure 19. Labour Party poster, July 1945.Resource: Popperfoto via Getty Images/Getty Images

In the increasingly affluent development of society, those who had experienced previous economic downturns maintained vigilance towards financial hardship whilst enjoying a comfortable life (Reed, 1950). There was considerable anxiety about the youth's consumption habits and entertainment content, and the media created a series of moral panics. At the same time, the infusion of black culture added a different type of allure and negative reputation to youth culture (Garland,

Gildart, and Gough-Yates et al., 2012). Bill Osgerby (1998) noted that World War II marked a watershed in developing and displaying young lifestyles. In particular, the few years immediately after the war saw a peak in public participation in some mature leisure activities, such as dancing in the halls (Strinati and Wagg, 1992). A brief postwar tranquillity birthed a spirit of rebellion and a perspective of living in the moment (Simon, 2017). The war imparted different content to art and refreshed old values. By 1943, at least one-third of British teenagers spent their hard-earned wages on "entertainment," including go to the cinema, dance in the halls, buy charm magazines, with at least 30 million weekly audiences (Savage, 2007, p. 414). Social surveyor Ferdynand Zweig noted in a 1949 survey that people were spending more on leisure than ever before, as long-term restrictions and austerity had increased their desire for pleasure amidst self-denial (Zweig, 1975). This period after World War II witnessed the rise of the middle-class youth expression movement and attracted more public attention and reaction (Hall and Jefferson, 2006). In the 1950s, the entire social environment gradually evolved into a youth market that was almost entirely working-class, these young people, who could earn wages as teenagers, naturally became the main consumers and producers of entertainment products such as records, cigarettes, and cosmetics (Abrams, 1959). The advent of the contraceptive pill and the abolition of national service also helped young people better control their choices and future. Teenagers at this time needed not only the financial security brought by high wages but also the dual satisfaction of creativity and emotional fulfilment, and dance and music supplemented the creativity deprived from teenagers at work (Todd, 2014). The BBC TV series Does Class Matter? showed the impact of social prosperity, slum clearance, education, and social mobility (Carpenter, 1998). It could be seen that people's daily experiences actually endowed the working-class with a unique value identity, this identity will not simply disappear in future development and gradually become a social fashion (Todd, 2014).

The working-class culture began to receive attention in social sciences from the 1950s, particularly London served as a breathtaking fermenting ground for cultural exchange, where everything associated with culture was exhilarating (Glancy,

2019). The lifestyle and pop culture of the wage-earning class youth caught the attention of specialists in sociological analysis. And they found alcohol and drugs were freely available, and sexual constraints were minimal (Morgan, 2021). Starting in 1952, certain British artists and intellectuals, including sculptor and painter Eduardo Paolozzi, architects Peter Smithson and Alison Smithson, and critics Reyner Banham and Lawrence Alloway, commenced congregating at ICA in London to celebrate American popular visual culture, craftsmanship, automobiles, advertisements and films. These artistic gatherings gave rise to the Independent Group and the Pop Art movement, two significant springboards for art (Marwick, 2011).

As an elite art organisation, they incorporated pop culture and were the first to determine that it was truly important. The impact of American pop culture on Britain was also a focal point of the institution's attention (Turner, 2005). In September 1953, Nigel Henderson, along with Eduardo Paolozzi and architects Alison and Peter Smithson, organised an exhibition at the ICA called *Parallel of Life and Art* (Figure 20). The random and non-linear collage of democratic images allowed the viewers to participate, letting the image serve as the messenger of transmission, not as the criterion for judging artistic value (Harrison, 2008). In this exhibition, photographs, X-rays, microscopic images and the natural world were presented in an exaggerated manner, representing the visual imagery that art could integrate into everyday life now.



Figure 20. Photograph of installation view of Parallel of Life and Art exhibition. Photo by Nigel Henderson. Resource: Tate Archive

Apart from ICA, the independent group (IG) as an organisation of postwar British artists and intellectuals, focusing on visual arts, architecture, graphic design, and pop art. Eduardo Paolozzi is considered to be the first Pop Art artist, showing the collage *I was a Rich Man's Plaything (1947)* at the first IG meeting in London in 1952 as part of the presentation of his groundbreaking *Bunk!* Series (Figure 21).



Figure 21. Eduardo Paolozzi collage "I was a Rich Man's Plaything (1947)" Resource: Tate Gallery

In IG first phase (1953-1954), IG held nine seminars on *The aesthetic problems of contemporary art* (Harrison, 2008). Notably, the second seminar gathered much American pop culture and various art concepts, such as western films, science fiction novels, billboards, car designs and pop music; Futurist, Surrealist, the Bauhaus, and Dada concepts. American pop art was rarely seen in Britain at this time, and its introduction was also an aspect of class struggle, whether real or imagined (Rycroft, 2002). Although IG left no legacy in the form of publications or exhibitions, the organisation's influence exists. IG was in part the precursor to the 60s, they foreshadowed the 60s.

In the 1950s, the common perception of delinquents was that of teenagers with excess money and free time, but in reality these criminals and teenagers did not have high income (Brake, 2013). A range of youth problems brought underlying social issues such as youth unemployment, education, crime (Garland, Gildart

and Gough-Yates, et al., 2012). The second wave of the baby boom had a massive impact on society. The British government constructed new schools and introduced measures such as free milk and child benefits to meet the needs of this generation after the war. The members of the Beatles were all born during the baby boom. This period was also when Britain was developing into a wealthy nation. The postwar period was characterised by the gradual decline of the old economy (cotton, mining, shipbuilding and engineering) and a boom in new industries, which began to transform the position of the North-South economy (Melman, 1988). With the abolition of National Service in the 60s and no compulsory military life for young men, John was fortunate to be the first member of the band to miss National Service and the Beatles avoided going their separate ways (Womack, 2009).

In the aftermath of the war, the rise in popularity and visibility of youth culture, the enhanced affluence and independence of lower-middle-class youth, and the scholarships provided by universities delayed their societal integration process (Glancy, 2019). Well-educated and well-nourished teenagers began to resist their parents' pre-war attitudes. At some level, artists, writers and sociologists started to pay attention to political matters due to potential societal impacts, and the crisis of British identity that peaked in 1956 in the Suez Crisis (Fuhg, 2021). For instance, as shown in Figure 22, Jeff Nuttall began participating in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) and numerous political cultural activities in the late 1950s, extracting three types: pop, protest, and art, from the fear of international nuclear bombs (Field, 2019; Strinati and Wagg, 2004).



Figure 22. First CND in Aldermaston, on 17th February 17th, 1958. Resource: Life

The resistance during this period was essentially a younger generation, born during World War II and the Baby Boom, expressing disdain for the behaviour of their elders, as manifested by crucial events such as the Hiroshima bombing and the subsequent nuclear construction during the Cold War (Nuttall, Field and Sinclair, 2018). Culture is irrational, continually evolving and changing with human variability, while at the same time, the wide influence of art is diametrically opposed to the daily economy of society (Nuttall, Field and Sinclair, 2018). The difficulties that followed dropping atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were unimaginable. In the years following, generations began to splinter, with cultural influence playing an incendiary role among the young, and nuclear weapons panic causing significant biological stress among the youth (Nuttall, 1968). The threats of the Cold War and atomic bombs brought about insecurity among the young, giving life an unsettling feel (Fuhg, 2021). The external environment in the 60s was the start of American involvement in the Vietnam War, the outbreak of the student movement in France, and the Cuban missile crisis. The student uprising in Britain began at the London School of Economics, the student rebellion spurred on by the May events in France (Glancy, 2019). The left-wing elements of the young middle

class and the criminal elements of the young working-class needed to reaffirm life through revelry and violence under this strong pressure aura (Nuttall, Field and Sinclair, 2018). The Guardian editor Alastair Hetherington called the decade of the 1960s the political sixties, due to the emergence of a new middle class in the late 1950s that had made astonishing financial gains, that is, car workers, technicians, nurses and office workers (Todd, 2014). Influenced by the 60s political movement, there were apparent changes in the evaluation of popular culture, such as the development of subcultures and the importance of feminism in society, and many previously banned novels could be published. A less positive ethos emerged at this time, whereby elegant culture was seen as positive and masculine; and popular culture was seen as emotional and consumer (Strinati and Wagg, 2004).

Postwar London did not transition directly from an imperial metropolis to a globalised, multicultural 'world city' (Malchow, 2011). This transitional environment was not only populated by postcolonial migrants but also by American middle-class sojourners, who brought with them a culture driven by related technology, consumerism, and media insertions (McLeod, 2004, cited in Malchow, 2011, p. 199). Popular culture began to gain importance, and politicians believed they could win elections with the assistance and support of British new cultural elite, and Prime Minister Harold Wilson is a prime example (Fuhg, 2021). Wilson's ennoblement of the Beatles with the Order of the British Empire served as a reciprocation for this cultural elite's support. But it also caused dissatisfaction among other members who were awarded the honour, with Hector Dupuis returning the medal, noting that the nomination placed him on the same level as vulgar nincompoops. The 60s saw British social and cultural patterns shift from the Victorian era to the post-Victorian era, with urban working-class youth culture symbolic of this transition. London became the swinging capital because it did not leave its past behind; instead, it integrated a traditional English past into a vision of global cultural modernity, allowing the history of the Victorian era to partake in the construction of modern Britain (Fuhg, 2021). The metropolitan culture of 60s Britain was fundamentally a middle-class culture; critics pointed out that the epitome of British culture was not Mozart but the Beatles (Anon, 1968). It is one of

the reasons I chose the Beatles as a nostalgic lens, which follows a consistent path with the trajectory of the resurgent vigour of British culture.

The wave of rock music brought by the Beatles, as an art form, served as the spokesperson for the anti-mainstream culture of the young, albeit initially as a specific conceptual consumption mode (Wald, 2011). Consumption satisfies people's desires, including for violence, emotion, and sex. Most popular culture can foretell the desired trend in the consumer market, with the desires implied in pornography, horror films, football, fashion magazines, and tabloid stories becoming legitimised through consumption; Lacan referred to this as one of the most profound drives of the subject (Brottman, 2005, p. 83). Personalised and consumerist cultural forms kept emerging, and these specific patterns facilitated the smooth conduct of the economy (Savage, 2000). New retail, marketing, and business concepts targeted young working-class teenagers, with the market explicitly catering to the rapidly changing tastes of white, working-class youth (Fuhg, 2021). Anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu proposed that tastes derived from one's class, upbringing, and preferences in clothing, home decor, food, and other consumer goods represent an alternative form of status and symbolic power (Jones, 2020). This 'Baby Boom' generation, drawn together by changes in the school system and musical convergence, predominantly originated from the middle and working classes. Notably, the boundaries between the lower middle class and the working-class were nebulous, permitting easy mobility (Wald, 2011). The distinct youth groups of various styles and political life lent the 60s an aspect of perturbation. Youth and youth culture was set to determine the nation's economic future and offer new opportunities for the politics of British identity (Fuhg, 2021). As for the nuances and allure of youth culture, I will provide a detailed description in the following section, elucidating how youth culture mobilised in this era within Britain and evolved into an international phenomenon.

3.1.2 American Cultural Influence and the Birth of a New Musical Landscape

For most people, the end of the World War II meant that the White House replaced No.10 Downing Street as the political centre of the world (Fuhg, 2021, p. 14). After the war, the world's domain was divided between the two new superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, and many no longer considered the empire to be unbeatable (Davies and Sinfield, 2013). The two world wars were like a marathon that lasted a long time, although there were periods of peace in the middle. Britain's physical strength was constantly undergoing exhaustion and by the end of the World War II, the country was completely exhausted, the infrastructure was in disrepair, and cities and industries needed to be rebuilt and restored. Liverpool's experience serves as an emblematic representation of the country's state following the two wars, a condition shared by many European nations (Skyes, 2013). During this period, the United States, a relatively unscathed nation, began to take over the reins of global leadership, and the disparity between Europe and the US became strikingly apparent and poignant. Henry Luce was the first to dub the 20th century the 'American Century', acknowledging America's preeminence in military might, economy, and political power in the aftermath of World War II (cited in Walker, 1998, p. 11). American values and ideas gradually permeated the consciousness of a world to which the modern experience and the American experience existed simultaneously (Bigsby, 1975). The alliances formed during the World Wars and the shared language meant that Britain believed in 'a special relationship' with the United States—a relationship that should be maintained in the face of American ascendancy (Walker, 1998, p. 10).

In the wake of World War II, the increasingly prevalent air travel, Hollywood films, and intertwining British film and theatre industries coalesced to form an expansive anglophone entertainment world (Glancy, 2019). The dramatic growth in relatively affordable and rapid air travel stimulated cross-traffic between tourists and professionals (Malchow, 2011). The war served as a catalyst, introducing foreign concepts, particularly American culture and lifestyle to Britain (Glancy, 2019). At this moment, even the most banal suburb in America, the blandest American car, or the most unassuming cartoon girl more at the centre of the world than any

cultural expression in Europe (Baudrillard, 1985; cited in Alloway, Crosby, et al., 1990, p. 239). Many universities educated intellectuals in the postwar period believed that Britain was in a state of demoralisation and needed to be restored to normality by rebuilding the pillars of morality (Veldman, 1994). They had a distaste for Americanisation, viewing it as a potent weapon of American popular culture attacking Britain, a weapon that could synergise with films, television, and numerous other media outlets (Simonelli, 2007). The America produces anxiety not often of hatred and fear, but of irony and anxiety, which Britain has about modernisation and consumerism (Malchow, 2011). The influence of American popular culture swept over like a tidal wave at this time; Jeff Nuttall stated in his book that he wished to distance himself from these specific American influences (Nuttall, Field and Sinclair, 2018). This threat of Americanisation also began to incite public unease about consumerism and moral panics (Glancy, 2019, p. 25).

As a result of the educational influence of art schools on working-class youth, American popular culture was more accessible to the British than European modern art (Walker, 1998). Much of American culture originates from Europe, and many acclaimed 'American' film stars and directors are British, such as Charlie Chaplin, Ida Lupino and Alfred Hitchcock, providing another rationale for British acceptance of American culture (Walker, 1998). The young London avant-garde, fascinated by American advertising, technology and media, include the IG in 1952 (Malchow, 2011). Jeff Nuttall (1968) exhibited his own zeitgeist in Bomb Culture, also expressing a desire to portray British anti-establishment creativity as unique and authentic. His passion for combative art, characteristic of British Pop Art, was influenced by New York beat artists and performers, like Yvonne Rainer and Robert Morris (Malchow, 2011). As shown in Figure 23, in 1950s, it was common to see newsagent shops in London with windows filled with images, products and text, and windows covered with posters of American crime, detectives, poster girls and films labelled as Pop Art (Walker, 1998). By the mid-1950s, New York had usurped Paris as the world's art capital, attracting an increasing number of British artists, students, and critics. Concurrently, job opportunities offered by American universities and art schools, scholarships provided by national institutions and

universities, and grants from various American charitable foundations made such visits and long-term residence in New York a reality (Walker, 1998). More and more Britons were gaining exposure to authentic American art, design, and popular culture. As British most significant foreign investor in advanced technology sectors, the youth emulated America's designs and styles. Pop musicians absorbed American popular music, spanning from blues and jazz to rock 'n' roll (Davies and Sinfield, 2013).



Figure 23. In 1951 Nigel Henderson took photo the shop front of S. Lavner, newsagent, 241 Bethnal Green, London. Resource: Nigel Henderson Estate /Tate Images

In the post-World War II period, the world of transatlantic popular music was marked by a racialised black/white binary (Shank, 2006). The American disc jockey style was transmitted to Britain via radio, with the network broadcasting of the American forces enabling many people to access American pop music. Radio Luxembourg, operated by four American companies, introduced rock 'n' roll to teenagers at a time when the BBC monopoly severely limited the broadcasting time of popular music (Malchow, 2011). American folk and blues had dominated British entertainment culture by the 1950s, and thanks to the musical tastes of American service members, American jazz had reached Britain and Europe (Fuhg,

2021). African American blues artists such as Josh White and Big Bill Broonzy travelled to Britain to perform for white audiences, and plenty of black American blues artists performed tours, which culminated in a fascination with the blues (Stratton and Zuberi, 2016). Elvis Presley, Chuck Berry, Jerry Lee Lewis, Big Joe Turner, Little Richard, Ruth Brown, Buddy Holly and dozens of other artists pioneered a new musical style that utterly transformed pop music (Wald, 2011). Without Elvis, there would be no Cliff Richard, who dominated British pop music before the Beatles era. American music shaped British music culture even during the successful period of the British music invasion (Fuhg, 2021). From the 1950s, many artists from Africa or African American descent arrived in Britain for work and study. They started performing in immigrant areas, and by the mid-60s, Britain became a crucible for the invention of cross-cultural music by black people (Stratton and Zuberi, 2016). Black artists may have had more imaginative potential in creating new artistic styles than white artists, but their talent was disproportionally rewarded (Wald, 2011, p. 239). However, national distinctions were minimal in terms of music, especially in Liverpool (Wald, 2011). As Liverpool was one of the main British harbors involved in the transatlantic slave trade, ships transported enslaved Africans to the Americas and returned with goods such as cotton, sugar and tobacco, which brought cultural and musical exchanges. Liverpool was exposed early to black music, including African rhythms, blues and jazz. The Beatles, the Rolling Stones and other rock musicians forged new musical directions based on black music, such as the radio waves that pervaded the Beatles' music (Wald, 2011). American rock served as a mentor to the Beatles. Elvis was one of the prominent influencers for John Lennon when forming his band and an idol at the start of his career. As a high school student, Lennon even sported sideburns like Elvis. Lennon once told his friends, "Without Elvis, he probably would be nothing" and later in life, he also stated the same (Womack, 2009). Aside from Elvis, John Lennon was influenced by American singersongwriter Bob Dylan. Lennon later claimed that listening to Bob Dylan's songs shifted him from merely professional songwriting to the internal subjectivity that

characterised the hippie counterculture: "I started to write my own songs" (Malchow, 2011, p. 139).

The advent of pirate radio, cheap phonographs, transistor radios, ITV and the BBC's popular music television shows brought pop music into most homes (Malchow, 2011). New trends and styles suddenly emerged from America and people were exposed to a wealth of pop music that had never been available before. The advent of the 7-inch 45 rpm transformed the distribution of pop music, the format as the phonograph disc record. These small technological developments allowed teenagers to have their own jukeboxes. The phonograph disc record evolved into a standard format and pop music meant jazz and swing, with the whole city of Liverpool awash with it (Lewisohn, 2013). London's weekly *New Music Express* positioned itself to appeal to the emerging teenage market by emulating the format of American chart publications. The old pop magazine *Melody Maker* followed with the "Pop 50" and "Top Ten USA" and by the mid-60s, it had weekly columns "Dateline USA" "Music Scene USA" or "US News". This frenetic growth was noted by Jeff Nuttall as "exactly the speed, rhythm and flavour of the maturing alternative culture" (Malchow, 2011).

Aside from music, the cinema was the commonplace locale where the working and middle classes essentially encountered American mass culture. The British public was drawn to American films from the outset, and cinema remained a favourite entertainment pastime for most British families into the 1950s. American films often offered images of the skyscrapers of New York, the streets of San Francisco, and a classless kingdom of fashionable people (Malchow, 2011). Prior to the widespread prevalence of television in households, the number of cinemas far exceeded that of today. Despite the quota system implemented to protect the domestic film industry from Hollywood domination, most films shown in cinemas were American (Walker, 1998). The American lifestyle was conveyed to British audiences via films, but the majority of viewers had no means to verify its authenticity (Walker, 1998). Americans realised through trial that cinema was an efficient means of propagating their country, values, consumerism, lifestyle, ideas,

and even language to the world (Glancy, 2019). These films included Hollywood's fashionable romantic films, westerns, and gangster films, the latter offering a harsh but authentic depiction of modern American life (Glancy, 2019). Novelist J.B. Priestley (1934) once wrote in his biography that a conspicuous feature of "New England" during the two World Wars was the reverence for film stars (quoted in Glancy, 2019). Celebrities were idolised for their beauty and lifestyle, a lifestyle that was described as liberating its inhabitants from the bonds of national culture, social class boundaries, and economic constraints (Glancy, 2019). British fan magazines were fond of American Hollywood, with stars and films consistently occupying prominent sections, including features about their homes, fashion, cars and pets (Glancy, 2019). Teenagers saw another world and a different lifestyle from American films, aspiring to live the life depicted in the cinema. They continuously emulated the attire of American stars, became familiar with their ideas, and experimented with various forms of entertainment. Everything about America, including youth culture, films and rock 'n' roll music, has strong appeal to teenagers. At the same time the baby boomer's numerical strength has made the society extremely Americanisation (Ward, 2001).

Moreover, through societal Americanisation, films gradually became a significant facet of the female market. It also affects the women's clothes, their thoughts and their perception towards men. In Europe, films popularised the image of women life-seeking and free-thinking, such as the character Ginger in the 1920 film *Flapper* (Cellania, 2013). As shown in Figure 24, these Flappers would dance and sing to jazz music, wear make-up, smoke, wear shorter skirts, abandon tight corsets, don short hairstyles, and live in the moment as a rebellion against the confinement of women in the past (Pruitt, 2018).



Figure 24. 1920s Flapper Girl. Resource: Hulton Archive/Getty Images (Pruitt, 2018)

Cinemas and dance halls served as venues for the independent and subversive activities of the 'New Women' of the 20th century in Britain and America, offering social spaces beyond schools, workplaces, and homes (Simon, 2017). Viewing films, a private act of imagination conducted in darkness, stirred young women's yearning for freedom, independence, and fantasies of love (Simon, 2017). Cinemas and theatres in Britain have a surprisingly large audience and the majority of these audiences are young women. Feature films filled with action, pathos, crime and romance are a hit for young girls, especially Western ones. Strong and kind heroines could venture into any vast space, fight evil and ultimately succeed (Simon, 2017). For the lower-middle class, films altered their leisure patterns and introduced new social areas. For men, football provided ample recreational satisfaction, but for women, cinemas represented an activity that could be enjoyed even without companionship (Glancy, 2019). This is mainly attributable to women's primary role as caregivers in the home, a strenuous task that led them to regard the cinema as their "sanctuary". Films allowed women to set aside daily frustrations and enjoy moments of tranquillity (Glancy, 2019).

3.1.3 Female sexual awareness alteration

The postwar period also saw shifting gender norms and reconfigurations of domestic life. These changes profoundly influenced youth identity and cultural expression in the decades that followed.

Billie Melman (1988) described the state of women in the 1920s in two groups of mutual, not separate terms. The first group used terms with sexual cultural overtones, including 'flapper', 'surplus woman' or 'superfluous woman', 'modem man', 'he man', 'sheikh'. The second group referred to critical terms used by audiences when commenting on popular cultures, such as 'best-seller', ' sex novel', 'middle-' and 'low-brow', and 'the Great British Public'. Flapper, used to describe very young prostitutes before the war, soon became widely used to describe thin and long-legged teenagers, and gradually shifted to symbolise various social shadows due to political issues (Simon, 2017; Melman, 1988). Flapper as a modern term, first appeared in the United States at the beginning of the 20th century. Relative to the opposition experienced by women's suffrage in Britain, the American suffrage movement did not encounter the same violent resistance, with women even being able to participate in municipal council meetings before acquiring the right to vote (Simon, 2017). From a societal acceptance standpoint, the historically shorter-lived United States has an advantage, contributing to the severity of cultural infiltration.

The term "Flapper" frequently appeared in news sections from 1927, displaying a high level of interest in female-related topics in mass media, primarily in outlets like the *Daily Mail* (Melman, 1988). The media viewed the sexually tempting flapper as a lure for young girls (Melman, 1988). Young women were reluctant to stay at home, awaiting marriage to a man who wouldn't return home and raising children, preferring instead to spend time and money in pursuit of fun and enjoyment of all that life has to offer (Cellania, 2013).

The understanding and awareness of sexuality underwent significant transformation amongst women, with many older individuals viewing procreation as the primary purpose of marital sexual activity, devoid of the need for female

pleasure (Mitchell, 2004). For women who lived through World War II, sex was an intensely private and infrequently discussed topic. They resided in a specific and formative historical milieu, their lives eroded by the poverty resulting from the two World Wars, with poor healthcare imposing a severe burden on a vast number of women and children (Szreter and Fisher, 2010). Even gynaecology was considered clandestine and shameful for women. After the war, due to the rise of the flapper, society at large began to have an unprecedentedly wide-ranging discussion about women and female sexuality (Melman, 1988). The 1928 Reform Acts conferred voting rights on all males over 21 and females over 30, imbuing women with the sense that they were more than mere breeding machines and deserved the same rights as the average youth (Simon, 2017). The suffrage movement ignited a collective spirit of solidarity amongst women and introduced an element of risk and unpredictability into young girls' perceptions of women's rights (Simon, 2017). The women's movement during this period primarily sought to maintain a relative equilibrium between political, private, and public life (Kustow, 1980). Concurrently, post-World War I witnessed a momentous explosion of sexual and cultural liberation, with the first widespread use of contraceptives enabling sexual activity along with the possibilities and choices associated with pregnancy. The popularity of Marie Stopes' (1918) sex guide and the metamorphosis of popular culture indicated the societal shift towards discussions of female sexuality. The society adopted a greater sexual permissiveness, more freedom, and permitted discussions about previously taboo subjects. The sudden expansion of the female sphere exposed all classes of women to the public, particularly as the growth of the entertainment industry, including radio, led to particularly complex and profound reality experiences amongst British women (Melman, 1988).

War, acting as a catalyst for transformation, initiated a modification and amalgamation of innate female images and thought patterns, along with a structural alteration in popular culture (Melman, 1988). The wartime period and the extended duration thereafter could be described as a time of evolution for various complex notions and forms of femininity and sexual consciousness.

Women from all social strata immersed themselves on a large scale in the world of

romantic novels, finding alternative satisfaction. This escapism transferred realworld issues into a fantasy realm, with this genre of novels often referred to as sex novels (Melman, 1988). The proliferation of novels correlated with the rapid expansion of British cities, the general increase in living standards among the impoverished, and the emergence of new popular entertainment forms. For instance, The Green Hat (Figure 25) stands as a classic case of commercialised best-sellers and the triumph of fashion, the eponymous green hat worn by the female protagonist became a temporary trend, and the novel became synonymous with a liberated lifestyle, free from societal and sexual constraints (Melman, 1988). Sex novels embody new freedom, not as a weapon for women to attack domesticity or monogamous marriage, but as a means of tribal solidarity to sever ties with past ideologies, expressing dissatisfaction with antiquated behavioural standards of sexuality. Sex novels act as a utopian haven, offering an escape from the realities of life and discomfort from material and cultural changes (Melman, 1988). Lacan's academic research has dramatically influenced feminism, particularly applicable to pornography novels and analysis (Brottman, 2005, p. 123). Most "best-sellers" could be obtained at a remarkably low cost, and novel readership began to extend to the lower-middle and even lower classes, with serial novels and periodicals thoroughly transforming from middle-class commodities into those of the working-class (Melman, 1988). Reading novels became a popular pastime for young girls, with most girls reading several magazines and novels each month, including detective novels and thrillers. Teen literature gradually began featuring independent, active female protagonists, such as the highly popular Nancy Drew series of the 1930s, thereby opening the consumer market for teen literature (Simon, 2017).



Figure 25. The book cover of "The Green Hat", (Horton, 2014)

Jobs also led to changes in the way young women integrate into class and gender relations, especially with colleagues offering advice on love, sex and marriage. Increasingly, young women began to work in factories and offices, giving them economic independence and social voice (Todd, 2006). Women started to realise that women needed more than just the right to vote, it was their door to opening up their freedom and that taking control of their money was the first step towards women's independence (Simon, 2017). Women's work experiences provided a class-based identity that expressed their desire for social change, and through these experiences young women generated a demand for their worth and a quest for economic independence and political power (Todd, 2005). Young women's desire for personal freedom outside of work contributed to developing commercial leisure areas (Todd, 2005). These changes were a cultural objective in that era, but women's tastes, interests and personalities as consumers were often downplayed (Glancy, 2019).

Rudolph Valentino, considered the first male screen icon or Latin Lover, was mysterious, sensual and emotionally expressive, challenging the traditional Hollywood masculine hero image. The In 1920s, Valentino film marked the first instance where fan behaviour was strongly delineated by gender, and primarily associated with intense female desire (Hansen, 1986). Valentino in the film fulfilled the romantic passions and complex sexual desires that women needed in that era and was the lover on the screen for women (Glancy, 2019). The adulation

of male stars serves as an avenue to express sexual desires often suppressed in daily activities (Lewis, 2002). Hollywood orchestrated the legend of Rudolph Valentino, connecting his on-screen persona with his life off the silver screen. The adulation of Valentino by women fostered the creation of the star, serving as the primary driving force behind this legend (Hansen, 1986). Part of the allure of male stars stems from the fact they will never be linked by marriage, because no one genuinely believes male stars would be with girls (Lewis, 2002). Rudolph Valentino's films represent the first instance in film history when the female audience was regarded as an economically significant entity, with these films explicitly targeting women (Hansen, 1986). Miriam Hansen (1986) described Valentino as "creating a spectacle of himself", accepting and encouraging the female gaze, thereby beginning to challenge the established social and political order. Women, being inspired, started to view their objects of desire with the same male gaze (Sweeney, 1993). From the film standpoint, Gertrude Price pointed out that the national spirit market has begun to open to women, treating them as equal commodity audiences, on par with men (Abel, 2006).

Postwar American consumer culture began to rapidly impact the lives of teenagers, with new marketing models constantly changing the perceptions of teenage consumption, especially teenage girl consumption (Rohr, 2017). Teenage consumption gradually became the fourth force in the Anglo-American consumerism project. The sexual revolution shifted the locus of female emotion to the commercial market, where young women were seen as the ideal consumers of capitalism, and the consumer market began to market to young women. For women, adolescence is the culminating stage of life, a period in which they maintain their enthusiasm and richness of emotion for all things, and they are real, beautiful and attractive (Simon, 2017). In the early twentieth century, teenage girls were not valued as consumers by consumer culture and producers, and as participation in leisure activities increased, especially in the 20s and 30s, American girls spent little time with their parents and allocated more time to their friends. Commencing in the 1940s, American advertisers started targeting young girls' consumer mentality. As dance and rock music gained popularity among this

demographic, youth culture began to evolve. During this period, the fanatically devoted young female pop music fans, known as Bobby Soxer, emerged. This term first appeared in *Time* magazine, named after the fashionable bobby socks they wore. Bobby Soxer was considered the predecessor of the Beatles' frenzied fans and later came to be used to refer to "an adolescent girl." The emergence of Bobby Soxer allowed businesses to recognise the consumer potential within the female teenage demographic, prompting them to begin targeting their products towards this age group. Following the Bobby Soxer, the term "female Teenager", connoting an idyllic state, first appeared in a 1944 Life magazine article titled "Teenage Girls – They Live in a Wonderful World of Their Own" (Figure 26) (Brenneis, 1944). The magazine displayed a series of contented white, middle-class American girls, predominantly blonde and blue-eyed, engaging in activities associated with Bobby Soxers. These girls could be seen wearing men's casual trousers, shirts and pyjamas, gathering together in denim jeans, dating their boyfriends, listening records, and purchasing the latest albums (Life, 1944). These images showed the things that young girls found interesting, and these were also the public's concerns about how teenagers spent their time (Thurschwell, 2022). In September of the same year, Seventeen appeared as the first magazine specifically dedicated to teenage girls. It promoted "youthful fashion and beauty, film and music, thoughts and personalities" to its ideal "healthy" female teenage audience (Snelson, 2012).



Figure 26. "Teenage Girls – They Live in a Wonderful World of Their Own" Resource: Life magazine 1994

Numerous male products designed specifically for young women have resulted, such as male characters that fit psychological expectations and the ideal independent woman (Simon, 2017). Freud on childhood sexuality points out that part of the energy of young fans is sexual, although many do not believe that 12-year-old girls have sexual feelings that need to be repressed (Lewis, 2002, p. 89). The obsession of young female consumers with the content of interest has allowed various brokers to promote even specific male figures as products. Companies target their audiences as young women who could scream and make them headliners, while these band members could also be the object of female sexual fantasies. The agency saw the appeal and attraction of the Beatles to young women and could maximise the potential of their fans. Using the Beatles as sex objects to be pursued has an uncontrollable power and desire for girls (Lewis, 2002). It could also be argued that The Beatles were a product for young women.

Brian Epstein took the band's singles and produced them, selling them to young women. Beatlemania marked the first large-scale eruption in the 60s centred around females. Before this, teenagers and prepubescent girls were expected to uphold a 'purity' that abstained from pursuing boys. The unconscious relinquishment of control characterised by screaming, fainting, gathering in groups, and repressing sexuality made this female sexual revolution notably prominent (Lewis, 2002). Viewing this from a certain perspective, management companies leveraged the music of the Beatles to offer opportunities for expressing female confidence, aggression, sexual desire, and solidarity (Gould, 2014). Young girls devoted their time and money to activities and merchandise offered by various fan clubs. These elements, now ubiquitous in contemporary fan culture, were unprecedented novel ventures during The Beatles era. Beatlemania was a staggering phenomenon. The following sections will reveal the detailed frenzy of this cultural sensation, leading us into an unforgettable and thrilling wave of cultural fascination.

3.2 The Swinging Sixties and Youth Identity Formation

The transformation of youth culture in mid-20th-century Britain serves as a crucial backdrop for understanding the Beatles' emergence and cultural resonance. The 1960s were not merely a time of aesthetic rebellion, but a period in which youth became a central subject of social, economic, and symbolic change. This section examines how the construction of youth identity through nostalgia, subcultural affiliations, countercultural resistance, and aesthetic experimentation. These elements created the conditions in which the Beatles could function not only as musical innovators but as icons of generational transformation.

3.2.1 50s and 60s British youth culture was a major expression of modern British nostalgia.

The emergence of youth culture in 1950s and 60s Britain marked a profound reorientation of generational identity, one that nostalgically contrasted modern freedoms with the perceived constraints of the prewar past. This cultural shift did not only signal new consumer patterns and aesthetic styles, it redefined how a generation related to memory, loss, and the promise of a modern future. The Beatles reanimated it in a form newly charged with optimism and desire.

In contemporary discourse, juvenile generally refers to the age group from school-leaving age 14 to 17 years old, while teenager is typically used to describe young wage earners (Todd, 2005). After the war, the term "teenager" was often used to describe young males under 21, usually with a connotation of criminality, while young females were referred to as "girls" (Mills, 2016). Youth culture is a modern concept in itself. John Gilles (1974), Michael Mitteraurer (1992) and Jon Savage (2007) pointed out that youth culture emerged as a social category in the late 19th century, initially noted due to concerns about crime and social reform (cited in Garland, Gildart and Gough-Yates, et al., 2012). The term "culture" in youth culture could be understood as a social group developing a unique lifestyle and being endowed with specific forms of expression to some extent (Jefferson, 2002, p. 10). The culture of a group or class is its unique way of life, reflecting its belief systems,

social relations, values and thoughts (Jefferson, 2002). Adolescents would mould themselves according to different types of societies and it can also be said that youth culture is a microcosm of the status of the country at a specific period. Since the mid-19th century, most leisure activities have been centred around working-class cultures, such as football, pubs and working clubs., expressing the values and experiences of this class (Hall and Jefferson, 2006). Youth in the early postwar period were seen as symbols of social progress, but with the emergence of crises, youth and youth culture began to mean more negative themes (Garland, Gildart, et al., 2012). Optimism was confined to early 50s discussions on the juvenile job market (Todd and Young, 2012). In most cases, the media first pay attention to the stylistic innovations of subcultures, but as the police and the judiciary expose some antisocial behaviours, including swearing, fighting, and smashing and grabbing, a moral panic begins (Hebdige, 2012). Youth culture began to be described as free, permissive, hedonistic, fashionable, obsessed with pop music, criminal and rebellious, with a growing generation gap between them and their parents (Mills, 2016). Media and politicians routinely use terms with youth as the main characters as tools to comment on social change patterns, while the rapid development of the youth market is seen as a benchmark for social change (Osgerby, 2020). Each aspect of youth culture being the product and response to social, economic, cultural, and political forces, mainly including pop music, literature, and film (Garland et al., 2012). In this specific environment, youth groups were promoted and identified by conspicuous signs, then disseminated and finally forgotten, such as Teddy Boy, Mod, Rocker, Hippies, etc (Jefferson, 2002).

In the postwar period, British national market gradually transitioned from heavy industry (such as steel, coal mining and shipbuilding) to light industry (such as consumer goods, electronics and fashion), thereby boosting the youth labour market and fundamentally changing the lifestyle of teenagers through work (Osgerby, 1998, cited in Mills, 2016). The new lifestyle broadly replaced the earlier ones, with the development of the 60s being key to the progression of themes and concepts, feelings and thoughts, stories, and characters (MacDonald, 2013). This

period's youth was marked by contradictions and overlaps, viewing it as a time full of freedom, an era of increasing independence, and a necessary stage to prepare for adult life (Mills, 2016). Working-class youth, like their parents, lived in cultural structures built by territories, institutions, relationships, and social practices, and their culture was surrounded by the parental culture in a state of subculture (Hall and Jefferson, 2006). Youth culture drew some elements from its parent culture and transformed them into their unique group culture, such as Rock and roll. Even if the youth culture seemed nonconformist at certain moments, these elements bore the shadow of the parent culture (Hall and Jefferson, 2006). These youth cultures originated from the broad patterns of the working-class and ordinary working-class young boys. Despite their differences, they originated from a class existing within a more inclusive culture (Hall and Jefferson, 2006).

Global changes in education, secularisation and new living standards began to pave the way for international youth culture (Fuhg, 2021). Rapid postwar population growth allowed the British talent pool to expand through education as well, with more and more young people spending their youth in educational institutions (Jefferson, 2002). The baby boom rejuvenated Britain, and by the 60s the first baby boom generation had reached an age where they could vote. The Queen signalled at the opening of the new Parliament in 1959 that the demands of young people would be the most challenging task facing the government (Fuhg, 2021). For plenty of parents, their control over their children would stop around the age of 15 (Nuttall, Field and Sinclair, 2018). Young people's real wages are constantly rising, while having to pay very little to their families. They are far less critical to the family economy than they were at the beginning of the century (Mills, 2016). Beginning with the public school need to provide employment services for graduating students, young people were gradually relieved of the responsibility of being the breadwinner of the family (Todd and Young, 2012). At the same time, during this period, mothers accepted part-time jobs and wanted their children to have a better life than they had when they were younger. Youths worked and earned wages at set hours without much responsibility obligations to the family, which means that young people who started working also gained the economic

right to enjoy leisure (Mills, 2016). Young people in the 60s categorised leisure as a decisive part of life and saw themselves as a unique component.

Working-class subcultures cannot exist without a sufficient financial base, and amongst the working-class, the income of adolescents has increased more rapidly than that of adults. The increase in relative affluence for adolescents represents a rise in the likelihood of funds available for leisure and recreation (Mills, 2016). This relative affluence demonstrates postwar consumerism and increased living standards (Mills, 2016). The market gradually opened to higher-income workers and lower-middle class teenagers. Although gender, age, location and relative affluence of individuals relatively influenced the consumption class, it did not affect them to become significant consumers of fashion, music and commercial entertainment (Mills, 2016). Marx called commodities social hieroglyphics, things are added new meanings, associations and values and expropriated from the world that provided them and then rehoused them in the working-class culture (Robert, 1990). Teenagers were described as the new consumers, with growing advertising allowing more and more opportunities to spend money. Writer Colin MacInnes calculated that young people in Britain spent £312 million a year in the 1950s, a figure that would actually have been much higher (The Times, 1958, quoted in Lewisohn, 2013). Starting in the 60s, teenagers were earning one-tenth of the entire country's income and spending over £800 million a year on clothing and entertainment, institutions like cinemas, dance halls, magazine publishers and record shops relied heavily on teenage spending, and almost half of the record and record player market was purchased by teenagers (Abtams, 1961). The changes in consumption patterns are as important as developments in politics, gender roles, class relations, family structures and sexuality (Marwick, 2011). The interaction between youth culture and the market has attracted the attention of many sociologists such as Bill Osgerby, Christian Bugge, Axel Schildt and Detleft Siegfried who discuss the dynamics of consumerism and the market in creating youth subcultures (Mills, 2016).

Due to the brutality of the war, people's expectations of life after the war reached an astonishing height, however Lord Woolton, Churchill's Minister for Reconstruction, pointed out that the peacetime economy would never be able to fulfil them. These unfulfilled emotions arise from the impulse to look for something new, including the search for a new polity and new leaders (Williamson, 1988). Malcolm McLaren, musician and boutique owner and manager of New York Dolls and the Sex Pistols, in reminiscing about the past, has said that London and other cities in the 1950s were no longer based on community, which left teenagers feeling lonely and without a sense of belonging, and that they needed to go in search of their own identity (Gorman, 2020). In addition, Pierre Bourdieu suggested that since working-class adolescents had a different experience to older generations, they had independent habits and they needed to keep up with the pace of change, and this pressure also made emotional instability (Fuhg, 2021). As a result, young people suffer from chronic and unseen pressures, with older people believing that life is good enough for young people, that they did not have to go to war, that they got enough to live on, and that they can be educated. But for young people, who have never experienced war, they cannot understand the "envy" of their elders, but now life is a mixture of pressure and constraint. Jeff Nuttall (1970) had described that when the first atomic bomb was dropped, a generation gap between the pre and postwar generations was formed, people in their adolescence could not imagine what the future held for them and the divide kept widening. Sharon MacDonald (2013) states that the cultural generation gap in the 1950s was essentially a clash between two fundamentally different lifestyles. However, in the 1960s, this generational divide underwent a fusion, with many youth movements attempting to bridge or reconcile the gap by challenging traditional ways of thinking and fostering new forms of understanding. The revolution of this era can be characterized as a revolution of the mind, where people began to question established norms, values, and societal structures. This intellectual revolution was far more powerful and influential than the external byproducts, such as fashion styles, music, and social protests (MacDonald, 2013).

British youth is a mix of new, more liberal and old, more conservative values and behaviours (Mills, 2016). Mass media created moral panic in the evaluation of young people, magnified the generation gap between young people and their parents, and also exaggerated the image of hedonistic young people (Glen, 2017; Mills, 2016). Parents see the teenage years as the last happy time before adulthood, while young people see it as an opportunity to start a new life (Todd and Young, 2012). Almost everyone was caught up in the moral panic of the era, with widespread fears of rising youth crime, vandalism, gang fights and football hooliganism. In the Notting Hill riots of 1958, the clashes between mods and rockers in 1964 and Enoch Powell's 'Rivers of Blood' speech in 1968, events that caused moral panic in which young people played the role of symptom and scapegoat, but all had broader or deeper social issues behind them (Collins, 2020; Jefferson, 2002).

3.2.2 The 60s British Subculture

As young people mature, various unique subcultures begin to emerge, each with its own distinctive style codes, values, and musical preferences. These subcultural groups were not only cultural phenomena, but also concrete responses to the anxieties and aspirations of postwar Britain. Among these diverse cultures, the Beatles played a contradictory role: they were both part of mainstream culture and subversive, acting as intermediaries between mainstream culture and the radical energy expressed by subcultures.

The 60s British subculture arose against the backdrop of a massive shift in the focus of the British economy from industrial to emotional labour, a shift of jobs to overseas markets, a massive influx of immigrants from developing countries into Britain, and an unprecedented level of job insecurity faced by native workers (Whiteley and Sklower, 2016). In the early 60s, large migrant communities had been established in working-class areas of Britain and some possible rapprochement existed between black people and neighbouring white groups. As some black people migrated to northern cities, black culture and black music gradually became integrated into white youth subcultures, and their opposing

values caused conflict and tension within the subculture (Hall and Jefferson, 2006). In the early stages of the subculture's development, some social reforms were initiated in Britain but did not significantly solve the problem. Society is still filled with many anxious elements such as pessimism, nihilism, concern about terrorist events, and many fashions, arts and music associated with subcultures (Whiteley and Sklower, 2016). Subcultures encompass many contradictory combinations and do not form self-contained opposing values (Marwick, 2011). Subcultures provide the poor, unemployed and underemployed with the means to participate in social production and have a bold voice (Whiteley and Sklower, 2016). Sociologists views subcultures in postwar Britain as solutions to problems arising from the collision of working-class communities and declining traditions. Murdock (1974, p. 213) saw how particular groups in society developed as they endeavoured to resolve common social conflicts. Economic and demographic changes form the essential basis for the structural changes occurring in youth subcultures, with urbanisation, mass communication media and national educational reforms all contributing to the formation of homogeneous subcultures within themselves. This is reflected in young people in that even the most conservative young people are uncontrollably influenced by all aspects of the new ideologies of self-expression and social critique (Marwick, 2011). Ken Gelder (2007) argued that when people create their own bodily dress according to their ideas and the way they present themselves to the people around them, it could be referred to as a subculture. For some young subcultures, it allowed members to express identity through the projection of a self-image free from class and occupational constraints; feelings and interpretations of some issues were subjective personalities and geographically limited (Brake, 2013). Wearing overalls and a particular uniform in everyday work and life is also a form of everyday selfmodelling. Empirically, groups of subcultures exist within specific segments of society with shared experiences regarding background, class, education and community (Brake, 2013). These unique stylistic elements can reflect and express a group's sense of self, and the unique different kinds of subcultural styles can be used as a basis for distinguishing between members of other groups, like Mods vs.

Rockers etc. The evolution of different styles also begins with promoting these oppositions, such as the direct opposition between Mods and Rockers.

Youth subcultures are formed within specific social and historical moments, marked and attention-catching, and then widely disseminated until they lose their uniqueness and disappear (Jefferson, 2002). Dick Hebdige (1974) argued that various youth subcultures, such as Mods, can be identified through possessions and items. Youth groups like Teddy Boy, Mod, Rocker, or Skinhead have unique attire, styles, focus, and environments that make them stand out and form distinct groups. For a time, they occupied the centre of public vision, with distinctive features such as the boot laces and velvet collared crease jackets of Teds; the tailored cuts, parkas, and scooters of Mods; or the dyed jeans, Nazi symbols, and decorated motorcycles of Bike-boys (Jefferson, 2002). Hebdige's work, Subculture: The Meaning of Style, is influential in subculture studies, using semiotics to explain the sartorial features, behavioural styles, and musical genres of youth groups (Turner, 2005). Phil Cohen shifted the focus of subcultures from things to the symbolic construction patterns of style within subcultures (as shown in Figure 27). Here, clothing, music, rituals, and dialects are four basic patterns, but not limited to them (Jefferson, 2002). Hebdige recognises that Phil Cohen links class experience and leisure styles and focuses on the parental culture backdrop in analysing youth subcultures (Turner, 2005).

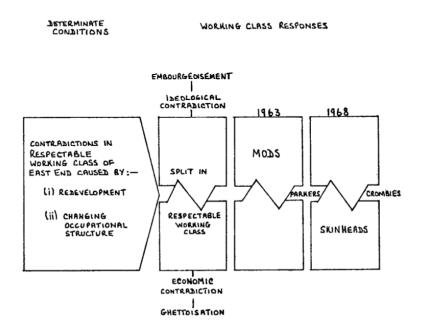


Figure 27. Class and Subcultures: A Version of Phil Cohen's Model (Hall, 2003, p. 34)

Subcultures are formed around the distinctive activities and "focal points" of the group, with some subcultures being loose offshoots of their parent culture, such as Teddy Boys, Mods, Hippes and Punks (Hall and Jefferson, 2006). Different subgroups of youth subcultures carry characteristics of the parent class culture (Jefferson, 2002). These youth groups could reflect reflections and solutions to various social problems through dress codes, activities, leisure pursuits and lifestyles, and the social behaviours of the organisation's members generally look different from their parents and peers, even though they may live on the same streets and in the same neighbourhoods (Hall and Jefferson, 2006). They persist and co-exist as distinct groups in cultures that are more inclusive than their class, but membership in a subculture does not allow them to avoid the influence of the life and conditions of the class as a whole. Phil Cohen (1980) argues that Mods, Teds, and Skinheads are all groups who are in a particular way trying to reclaim what is in their parent culture content that represents the potentially divisive material in society. The range of different manifestations of subcultures that arise from this centred parent culture might be summarised as a central theme, including the tension between the consciousness of the traditional working-class

and the new consumer hedonism (Cohen, 1980). However, Ian Chambers (1985) and Bo Reimer (1995) have argued that subcultures are an attempt to escape socioeconomic class and do not change it.

Youth subcultures that emerged in the 1950s used appearance as a means of competition, becoming part of a social and cultural revolution, a trend that exploded in the 60s (Maíra, 2016). These seemingly strange and colourful designs constituted the style of the young generation, not only symbolising shifts in fashion trends and reflecting the cultural and societal revolution that society underwent after WWII (Maíra, 2016). This eruption was laced with long-suppressed frustration, with the conservative public institutional system continually exacerbating this sense of frustration (Marwick, 2011).

Rock and roll inspired the subculture of Teddy Boys, who saw this music as an aggressive form of entertainment that could stir up enthusiasm for life and expression of spirituality (Gould, 2014). The Teddy Boys' look was entirely masculine, unlike hippies or punks (Miles, 2010). The style and attitude of the Teddy Boys not only gained support amongst the working-class, but could be recognised in art schools in particular. Art schools were not free at this time, and their grasp was in the hands of former colonial residents and public school students. The resistance of these Teddy Boys was like young people fighting against a more brutal and intransigent institution, with an inexplicable sense of mission and urgency (Miles, 2010). In the youth subculture, healthy scepticism became more open and franker, with suspicion and disregard for adults, there was also admiration for the more daring in the eyes of the conformists (Marwick, 2011). The Mod subculture began to emerge towards its climax in the early to mid-60s, and was a style adopted by a small minority of young working-class people (Maíra, 2016). Twiggy's Mods look was the cover of a poster for Swinging London (Conekin, 2012). The Figure 28 is the photograph of model Twiggy in Battersea Park in the summer of 1967, and often appeared on articles relating to 60s Britain.



Figure 28. Twiggy, Battersea Park, London; with the model riding on a moped; photographed by Ronald Traeger (1937 - 68). Resource: British Vogue, July 1967

Youth culture allowed for female self-expression, especially in Mods, where women had a richer participation than in other youth groups, and they formed a female culture of belonging to girls in a subculture that allowed for the coexistence of women of different races and temperaments (Fuhg, 2021). There was a neutrality embedded in the Mods style, and the general public, in the photos sees the boyish femininity of Mod women, and this look is often seen in the workplace (boutiques, beauty and apparel industries, and white-collar sectors). It is also due to this Mods style being neat and tidy and also allowing young women not to face the kind of anger from parents, teachers and employers that other subcultures cause (Conekin, 2012).

3.2.3 Countercultural Movements and Their Enemies

The countercultural explosion of the late 1960s was not a spontaneous break, but the culmination of tensions simmering within Britain's social fabric. As new forms of political and sexual liberation emerged, so too did institutional backlash and public panic.

Scottish political theorist Tom Nairn (1968) once wrote, "It may be true that the more advanced social systems of our own era may well be caught up in unprecendented dialectical conflicts of their own that threaten their internal stability" (quoted in Hall and Jefferson, 2006, p. 65). Countercultures emerge from such internal rifts, born during pauses between old and new variants of mainstream ethics, with youth being the most aggressive and visible bearers (Jefferson, 2002). Historically, countercultures could only persist as artefacts during periods of economic surplus and was often manifested humorously in nostalgic media environments. For example, 1960s countercultural symbols like peace signs, tie-dye fashion and rebellious rock music. Beginning in the 1970s, counterculture rapidly declined, mainly correlating with a significant economic downturn (Malchow, 2011). Counterculture is the product of adults demonising youth, a fate that befalls every generation, particularly in British culture, which tends to reject children's culture. Each generation of young people is seen as a soft target, needing to resist in order to avoid blows from the establishment (Miles, 2010). Counterculture and subculture share certain similarities based on class ownership and specific patterns of youthful identity associated with a certain style. These young people from different classes collectively confront a common adversary. However, they also exhibit distinct differences. The counterculture represents a universal reaction to a series of contemporary societal issues, resulting in one or a series of large-scale movements to address globally dispersed social problems, such as feminist movement. Subcultures, conversely, represent small-scale, rule-deviating solutions to these societal issues, such as goth subculture (Whiteley and Sklower, 2016).

Late adolescence and early twenties can be described as a period of emotional volatility, which is also a formative period for musical taste (Leaver and Schmidt, 2010, p. 109). Popular music has offered young people a novel mode of self-expression, serving as a platform for emotional release and creativity (Todd and Young, 2012). Music, an essential aspect of counterculture, provides a sense of collective identity that society needs (Shankar, 2000, cited in Leaver and Schmidt, 2010, p. 109). Blending different music genres provides a rich experience against

the backdrop of socio-political culture. The counterculture also enhances locality, community, and collectiveness awareness among different groups worldwide (Whiteley and Sklower, 2016). Historian Mark Donnelly points out that the field of popular music is the most influential force in shaping young people's environments (August, 2009). In the 1950s, the fusion of black gospel and blues with white country and western appeared in rock music, birthing a novel form-rock 'n' roll. This fusion gradually erased the boundaries between Black and working-class British youth, enabling rock music to detach from its parent culture and transplant to Britain, becoming the core of the Teddy Boy style (Hebdige, 2012). The practice of mapping social and political aspects onto rock music is part of positioning certain elements of youth culture as countercultural (Simonelli, 2007). As more people discussed and played music, music became a hotter topic than ever before. British teenagers' cravings for rock music increased and even developed into something adults despised (Lewisohn, 2013). From the mid-1950s to the early 60s, the development of pop music was astounding. Various music companies and record dealers began targeting teenage tastes, knowing that they could make more money catering to young people's preferences than their parents' love for romantic folk and big band music (Sandbrook, 2015).

Various countercultural movements developed out of independent youth culture in Britain and the US from the 1950s onwards, before small regional movements such as the Beat Generation failed in getting the general public interested. Beat Generation, a literary subculture movement initiated by a group of writers to explore the post-World War II American culture and politics. In the decade following the war, various artistic movements, including Pop Art, the Free Film Movement, CND and local rock bands, changed society. In January 1958, various organizations protesting against nuclear weapons tests came together at a meeting held at the residence of the Dean of St Paul's Cathedral, where they officially merged to form the CND (Miles, 2010). Many splinter political organisations and anti-Vietnam War protests took place, driven by leftist political activists (August, 2009). At least half of the marchers and demonstrators in this movement were young people under the age of 25, and these young people

brought some uniquely participatory and youth subculture music-making elements to the march (Marwick, 2011). The energetic behaviour of young people shares a sense of optimism and excitement full of creativity (Malchow, 2011). Writer David Mellor (1997) claimed that British counterculture was in a league of its own, and that significant crossover of individuals, institutions and styles could be seen from the psychedelic designs, performances and urban trajectories, from the pop-art scene to the underground (Glancy, 2019).

Counterculture was used as an umbrella term to describe an amorphous set of activities and ideologies that found a common purpose in the 60s (Bennett, 2005). Members and exponents were generally well-educated students, artists, writers, critics and successful musicians, mostly middle class, who hoped that by creating a culture they could conform to their vision of a revolutionary society of the future (Simonelli, 2007). Counterculture as it emerged in the 60s was a subculture based on youth culture. Initially appearing in isolated urban areas such as the Haight Ashbury in San Francisco (the main centres of the counterculture) and gradually spreading, it was the most prominent cultural revolution since the World War I (Macan, 1997). This subculture consisted mainly of young middle-class white people who consciously rejected their parents' lifestyle (Macan, 1997). The young generation had a strained relationship with those in power, and the Redlands Affair and subsequent trial in 1967 sparked a major public scandal that was widely reported in the media. The events also sparked a public debate about drug use, personal freedom and the role of the police and the courts. This event explains various changes in 60s Britain, including the legal liberalisation of individual behaviour, the sexual revolution, the weakening of traditional moral norms, and the emergence of alternative and countercultural lifestyles (Collins, 2019). The Lady Chatterley case of 1961 was the only liberal success, and the Redlands Affair became the defining scandal of the 'Summer of Love' and began the debate on how permissive Britain should become (Collins, 2013). The nostalgic longing of the baby boomers was expressed through historical heritage and superiority as a 'mainstream' ideology, and for generations after the 60s, counterculture has become part of a commonly accepted memory (Bennett, 2005). Jeff Nuttall

expressed CND as an understandable desire to represent British counter-institutional creativity as unique and authentic (Malchow, 2011). All activists (including student protesters, advocates of psychedelic liberation, Beatles and rock festivals fans, supporters of free love, members of underground organisations, advocates of black power, women's liberation and queer liberation) wished to contribute to the eventual collapse of this "bad bourgeois society" through their actions, both as participants and as witnesses (Marwick, 2011, p. 19).

3.2.4 The Intersection of Music, Fashion, and Art in the Swinging Sixties

In the 1950s and 60s, Britain found itself in a predicament, having lost its imperial glory and facing the pound's devaluation. While it had lost its imperial splendour, it also regained a sense of ease that was absent when it bore the burden of global leadership (Halasz, 2015). For some older people who had experienced the war, the loss of imperial honour and the replacement of international command by the United States brought shame and distress (Halasz, 2015). In the 1950s, Britain was highly praised internationally for its citizen loyalty, high standards of public service, and the peaceful implementation of parliamentary institutions and the welfare state. However, its arts and philosophy were considered archaic due to its failure to keep up with the times (Marwick, 2011). Pop artists gradually became aware of America's growing influence, evident in Derek Boshier's use of cartoon characters in his collages, as shown in Figure 29 (Rycroft, 2002). The work that the Royal College, of which Derek Boshier worked for, did in the 1960s built on the work that the IG had done, which was to create a modern art.



Figure 29. Derek Boshier's "Self Portrait" 1954. Resource: Gazelli Art House

In its early development, British pop art could be seen as a strategy to cope with America's prosperity, an unattainable dream (Miles, 2010). Free education and healthcare made teenagers healthier, sexually mature, economically independent, and culturally confident. Although many people viewed teenagers as a social threat, others saw this as a business opportunity (Sandbrook, 2015). Starting in 1956, Britain's economy began to rebound, unemployment fell, and the housing, car, and durable goods markets soared, promoting consumerism and a significant rise in the stock market (Levy, 2003). By the end of the 50s, London was flourishing with espresso bars, milk bars, skiffle music, full employment, jukeboxes, new commercial television channels, game shows, the Goon Show (a British radio comedy), widescreen films, horror comics, rock and roll, and a satellite motorway, all contributing to the construction of a new society (Miles, 2010). Affluence, consumerism, changes in sexual attitudes, and cultural shifts affected a large part of society, not just the youth (Marwick, 2011). London rapidly transitioned from an old capital to a fashion hub, initiating economic and cultural revival and a wave of

new trends in art and popular lifestyles. Many dynamic elements converged here, including youth, pop music, fashion, celebrities, satire, crime, art, sex, scandals, theatre, films, drugs, media, and more (Levy, 2003). The Figure 30 shows the influence of the miniskirt and Mary Quant bob haircut. Britain is tolerant, inclusive and cosmopolitan, a state seen as a legacy of Pop culture (Jones, 2020). This revolution continued through the seventies with the evolution of fashion, interior design, and cooking trends (Jones, 2020).



Figure 30. A street scene in 1966. Photograph by Carlo Bavagnoli. (Norman, 2016, September 4)

The changing image of London in the postwar period could be characterised as a redefinition of art, media, fashion, architecture and literary expression (Rycroft, 2002). London was moving away from squalor and monotony to become fashionable and diverse. Culturally London was more affluent than at any other time, for example, the BBC, the British Film Institute, the British Council, the Arts Council and the Independent Television Authority were all based in the capital and the Arts Council tended to pay more attention to London when reviewing eligibility to award grants (Sandbrook, 2015). London began to fill with the confidence of the working-class determined to prove that it could master popular music and fashion, while the international success of the visual arts scene, including British pop painters and British cinema caused widespread excitement (Gould, 2014). The

ICA, as an organisation dedicated to contemporary art, combined art and ideas to break down attitudes that disliked talking about visual culture (Davies and Sinfield, 2013). David Mellor (1997) noted that London was well grounded in a certain transatlanticism with British psychedelic design, performance and metropolitan positioning witnessing a significant crossover of individuals, institutions and styles from the pop art scene to the underground (cited in Malchow, 2011).

Modern magazines promoted the lifestyles of youth, especially in Britain, and established the symbolic identity of the territory through fashion, which was a success of the empire or a point of restoration of honour (Maíra, 2016). Swinging London is a term from *Time* Magazine in 1966, originally from the travel feature 'back of the book', mainly for older people planning a summer holiday (Halasz, 1966). The cover of the 15 April 1966 issue of Time magazine showed all the subtle changes London was going through, with a brightly coloured collage designed by Geoffrey Dickinson (as shown in Figure 31), featuring elements such as rock stars, Union Jack sunglasses, miniskirt 'dollies', Caine's the latest hit film Alfred, Big Ben, red double-decker buses, Prime Minister Harold Wilson, Rolls Royces, discos, roulette wheels and bingo halls (Halasz, 1966). In the same issue, the article "You can walk across it on the grass (Time, 1966)" described London's status as the swinging capital of the decade. London, like Vienna in the 1910s, Paris in the 1920s, Berlin in the 1930s and New York in the 1950s, was the place that set the social and cultural benchmark for the rest of the world (Rycroft, 2002). The cover was also controversial in different ways, such as Miniskirts and Dollies, although the visualisation of Swinging London from a modern perspective is stubborn and universal (Gilbert, 2006). In describing this cover, Stephen Inwood, a lecturer at Thames Valley College (1998), incorporated some negative language. He asserted that the article provided American readers and potential tourists with a reasonably superficial guide, introducing clubs, boutiques, restaurants, and discotheques as snapshots of London's youth culture. He defined London as "a city steeped in tradition, seized by change, liberated by affluence."

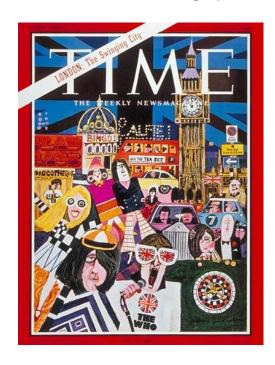


Figure 31. "London, the Swinging City." Resource: Time cover, 15 April 1966.

A report in Life in late 1966 pointed out that the significance of Swinging London lay in the extraordinary exhibitionistic self-consciousness of the British people, which was 'an almost conscious epitaph' on an era 'whose sun was nearly set' (Booker, 1969; quoted in Gilbert, 2006, p. 3). Art critic Piri Halasz (1966) wrote in an article titled London: The Swinging City, 'In a once sedate world of faded splendour, everything new, uninhibited and kinky is blooming at the top of London life.' (quoted in Miles, 2010, p. 289). Similar descriptions also appear in Robert Hewison's Art and Society in the Sixties, and Peter Ackroyd's London: The Biography (Halasz, 2015). Many young people from America and Australia saw London as a pilgrimage site to seek "all things novel, uninhibited and lascivious," and some British youths who lived far from London would travel there every week (Miles, 2010; Gilbert, 2006). The New York Times praised London's status, and in 1965, Newsweek listed London as a hot travel destination (Halasz, 2015). Starting in the 60s, the number of Americans entering Britain exceeded the influx of new Commonwealth immigrants yearly (Malchow, 2011). Britain built an Americanstyle modernisation in its historic cities, with London becoming a destination for affluent Americans. Time Magazine pointed out that 60s London was experiencing

a cultural revival akin to the Elizabethan era, boasting music, theatre, and film (Halasz, 2015).

London was transformed from a conservative postwar city into a bustling place of possibilities, fuelled by a booming economy and a growing young population. People had a new identity and sense of vitality (Gilbert, 2006). Groovy London has been used to describe this vibrant, free and innovative atmosphere (Sandbrook, 2006). London was a modern city built on tradition, with old-fashioned elegance on the streets, gentlemen in bell-bottoms and velvet jackets, and elements of Pop Art in the city (Malchow, 2011). As a critical aesthetic phenomenon in Swinging London, Pop Art dissolved the accepted rigidity in the concepts of culture, morality, taste and etiquette and became the new look of the King's Road (Rycroft, 2002). It was a city of distinctive colours and young subcultures. It promoted the idea of a classless society run by a new elite, whose talents for design and innovation provided a seemingly inexhaustible supply of new images and products (Rycroft, 2002). These new elites consisted of economists, professors, actors, photographers, singers, advertisers, television executives and writers. Christopher Booker, a privately educated contemporary observer, identified the true vanguard of this revolution as young people from the upper-middle class, but also recognised the cluttered and classless nature of Swinging London (Jones, 2020). Boutiques, galleries and clubs, fashion and enthusiastic consumerism, helped define the Swinging London scene as 'style-obsessed, hedonistic and apolitical' (August, 2009). London expressed loud and clear to the world through the various forms of youth culture while monetising this content (Levy, 2003). Casinos, art galleries, boutiques, antique markets, and clubs appeared in Mayfair, Chelsea, or South Kensington, from Park Lane to Sloane Square and the King's Road combined the 'coolness' of the United States and traditional British 'cool' (Malchow, 2011).

The transformation of culture and economy fostered the robust development of fashion, design, music, photography, modelling, magazine publishing, and advertising (Gilbert, 2006). Historian Arthur Marwick, in his research survey on the fashion and consumer culture of the 60s, discovered that a critical factor in the

broader cultural revolution was the change in consumer habits (Gilbert, 2006). London, the most crucial site of postwar modernity in Britain, was where American culture and materiality had penetrated the deepest (Malchow, 2011). London began to feel the impact of new forms of business organisation and marketing strategies emerging from the United States (Fuhg, 2021). Paul Passavant asserts that the atmosphere of the 60s allowed consumers to see themselves as knowledgeable, and people had some autonomy in how they used and attributed meaning to the products they purchased (Passavant and Dean, 2004). Pierre Bourdieu (1984, p. 311) pointed out that the fashion of clothing and cosmetics in the 60s was a fundamental element of the dominant paradigm. He argued that the presence of fashion during this period was an inevitable evolution of power, and to overlook fashion would be a naive approach in historical research. Due to postwar changes in material life that brought tens of thousands of people into the consumer environment, young people began to dominate the societal tastes in fashion, music, and pop culture (Marwick, 2011). Various new types of enterprises, including boutiques, fashion designers, clubs, and modelling companies, were freed from the old fashion norms, demonstrating a delight in the natural attributes of the human body with new self-expression modes (Marwick, 2011). With the promotion of fashion trends through magazine articles and covers, and the democratisation of ready-to-wear, Paris gradually lost its position as the centre of fashion (Maíra, 2016). Paris had to face the predicament of sharing territory with designers from other countries, and the fashion centre shifted from Paris, focused on haute couture, to fashion-forward London, based around King's Road and Carnaby Street's boutiques (Maíra, 2016).

The year 1966 was marked by England's World Cup victory and the vibrant eruption of Carnaby Street fashions, creating new uniforms for youth pursuing trends. A significant manifestation of the Swinging Sixties was the youth fashion revolution. John Stephen, son of a Glasgow grocer, established His Clothes on London's Carnaby Street in 1958, primarily selling sharp but not particularly innovative European suits, and soon others in Carnaby Street followed suit (Bernard, 1978). Designers and entrepreneurs began to cater to young people's tastes; stockings

became bold and patterned, leading fashion writer Ernestine Carter to dub 1963 'the Year of the Leg' (Bernard, 1978). British historian Marcus Collins (1999) pointed out that a liberal attitude towards sexuality pervaded youth culture, and unfettered underground activities were a hallmark of this period. Feminist Sheila Rowbotham believed that young women of the 60s challenged the gender roles of the 50s, engaging with and utilising the new urban youth culture and seeking autonomy in education, career, and sexuality (August, 2009). British fashion designer Mary Quant viewed the Mods as a significant source of inspiration for her designs and was the first designer to acknowledge the influence of youth subcultures (de la Haye, 2022). If a girl wore the right clothes, had the right hairstyle, and frequented the right clubs, she was considered a Mod (Conekin, 2012). Mary Quant's liberating fashion style gave young people a sense of identity. She drew inspiration from school uniforms and men's clothing and transformed men's cardigans into dresses (Figure 32). The media labeled the Mod subculture in the 60s as a fashion trendsetter (Maíra, 2016). The miniskirt, created by Mary Quant, became a symbol and representation of the 60s, youth, space, and vitality (Quant, 2012). Beyond its literal form, this garment represented a potent symbol of social, cultural, and political freedom (de la Haye, 2022). Mary Quant stated in a 1995 Vogue interview that the miniskirt was a celebration of youth, life, and tremendous opportunities for women and a tool for women to control their sexual behaviour (Dairywala, 2014). In March 1964, a British teen magazine proudly proclaimed, there are Mods everywhere in the world! Concurrently, British style began to trend in France, the country synonymous with fashion (Fuhg, 2021).



Figure 32. Jersey dresses, Mary Quant, 1966 – 67, Britain. Museum nos. T.353-1974, T.354-1974, T.79–2018. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Sheila Cohen, a collector of Victorian costume; her boyfriend, the portrait painter Nigel Waymouth, and the Savile Row-trained tailor John Pearse ran the store Granny Takes a Trip from 1966 to 1969 (Figure 33, the front always changes at the time). They started with vintage clothing and then started making their own designs. This was the beginning of vintage, a desire for nostalgia. The designs have late 19th and early 20th century graphics, like something Granny would have worn, and this postwar nostalgia is appealing. It was a compensatory response to the British sense of national entropy (Malchow, 2011). Granny Takes a Trip was also the first psychedelic boutique in Groovy London in the 60s and went on to dress the Beatles, the Stones, Jimi Hendrix and Pink Floyd (Miles, 2010). The late 60s saw working-class youth take a do-it-yourself approach to fashion, with modern fashion incorporating British folkloric motifs represented in the form of tweed, which Mary Quant redefined to break free from the shackles of national identity symbols (Fuhg, 2021). The archaic past is refreshed with different content through modern reinterpretation. In the 1970s, the style of Granny Takes a Trip changed to more glam rock, which was more in line with the trends of the time.

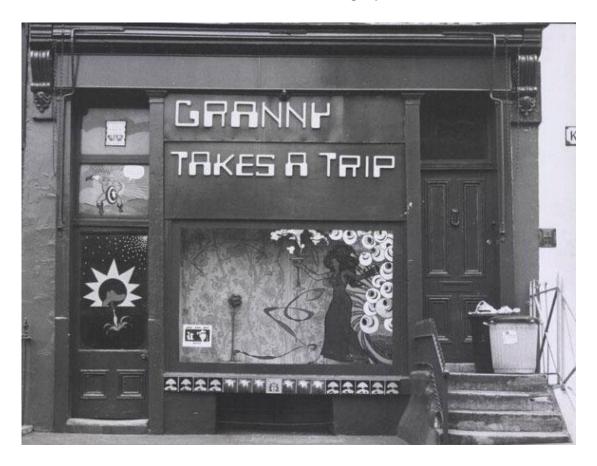


Figure 33. Granny Takes a Trip in 1960s. Resource: Atom retro clothing

David Gilbert (2006) argues that the myth of Swinging London needs to be contextualised within the more extended history of London's consumer and fashion cultures. As a novel and creative youth movement, the Swinging Sixties saw London as the glowing epicentre. The notion of the Swinging city endures in forms of national mythology and international stereotypes, such as the mid-1990s 'Brit-pop' and 'cool Britannia' as nostalgic uses of these urban memories from this period (Gilbert, 2006). Historian Raphael Samuel (2012) postulates that our views of the past are influenced by contemporary concerns (cited in Jones, 2020, p. 158). Swinging London represents the utilisation of a memorable past for redevelopment in the present, a form of "progressive nostalgia" (Jones, 2020, p. 159). Tom Salter, the owner of shop Gear in Carnaby Street published a short book about street. After that, several later generations of Salter's tourists have repeatedly returned to the Carnaby Street, visit shops and clubs, like return 60s London (Gilbert, 2006). The merging of music and fashion industries, creating and promoting youth lifestyles and values, culminated in Swinging London. This youth culture collided

and collaborated with designers and artists, exhibiting the vitality of the time in the streets (Maíra, 2016). Swinging London was human made, a conglomerate of overlapping individuals, with some emerging to lead the era (Shawn, 2003). The success of pop music, leading charts worldwide, redefined a new era of popular culture.

3.3 The Beatles as a Cultural and Social Catalyst

The prevailing consensus regarding the Beatles is that they are one of the most extraordinary pop music ensembles in history, their music enriching the lives of millions (Macdonald, 2007). Press officer Derek Taylor stated at the time of their disbandment that the Beatles were not merely a pop band, but rather an abstract concept and a repository of many things (Sandbrook, 2006). The Beatles' profound role as pioneers of social and cultural transformation has catalysed significant changes, redefining societal norms and expectations. It is through its cultural intermediary function that the Beatles not only participated, but also profoundly reshape the cultural and social structures of Britain and even the world.

3.3.1 The Beatles as a Catalyst for Social and Cultural Change

The term 'Beatlemania' was first used by the British press in October 1963 to describe the fervour of Beatles. Newspapers and journalists created this word to capture the extreme excitement, hysteria and obsession that fans, especially young women, displayed at the band's live performances, public appearances and in the media. Beatlemania started in Liverpool, gradually spread throughout Britain, and peaked in late 1963 (Campbell, 2021). The Beatles had become a phenomenon in Britain, a frenzy that was unimaginably insane in Britain. They even had to pretend to be police officers to get into the theatres where they were performing, and the screams of their fans during performances left them communicating by lip-synching (Womack, 2009). The Beatles' unique personality, creative style, uniqueness and freshness of sound, and the outbursts and energy on stage made nothing more authentic than the Beatles, whose birth broke years of habitual cultural restraint in Britain (Levy, 2003). Fans surrounded the hotels and theatres they stayed in; queues of motorcades chased them, and the level of adoration was such that newspaper reports couldn't keep up with the public's needs (Levy, 2003). Robert Zemeckis's 1978 film I Wanna Hold Your Hand was a showcase for the fervour of Beatles fans, with featuring them sneaking into the Beatles' hotel suite (Sweeney, 1993, p. 3). As the Beatles' career peaked in 1963, touring the United States was extremely important. Before this, Cliff Richard, the

most popular pop musician in the United Kingdom and known as the pioneer of British rock and roll, had not been very successful in his assault on the United States (Millard, 2012). Touring to the United States turned out to be a challenge that the Beatles had to face as they had already climbed all the peaks in the U.K. Brian Epstein said as the plane landed at JFK (John F. Kennedy) International Airport that America would make the Beatles world stars, but if they failed, it would also destroy their previous successes (Epstein, 1998). In 1964, the Beatles made their debut at Studio 50's The Ed Sullivan Show in New York City for their first live performance, and in the weeks leading up to the show, several Beatles albums had already reached number one on the US Charts (Figure 34). American teenagers scrambled to buy the new Beatles album, and the first to get the album always has more voice (Millard, 2012). The show also broke records as one of the seminal moments in television history. Time Magazine reported that the Beatles were leading a change in which post-rock music was becoming an art form in a way that popular music had never been before (Wald, 2011). The Daily Mirror called the Beatles' US tour the most astonishing triumph in the history of popular music (Millard, 2012). Example of a successful invasion of the United States, this unprecedented musical success also opened the door for the British rock and roll invasion of the United States, typifying the British takeover of American musical forms and paving the way for the bands that followed.



Figure 34. The Beatles' First Appearance on "The Ed Sullivan Show". Resource: The Ed Sullivan Show Website

When the Beatles first appeared, no one could have predicted that these four boys would create a miracle belonging to Britain, and it was thought that they would be as fleeting as any other young band. After the Beatles grew to fame, they, like other bands, were compared to Elvis Presley, who was the gold standard for record sales and fan hysteria (Millard, 2012). However, after the Beatles gradually and consistently broke records, Beatlemania became a standard for fans around the icon's volume, Steven D. Stark (2005) has said that the screams that greeted Elvis Presley were quadrupled on the Beatles, and Beatles' records began to become the standard for other popular musicians. After the Beatles' successful invasion of America, almost every newspaper review in the country expressed how humble and likeable the performers were (Feldman-Barrett, 2021). The Beatles were seen as the British response to American domination of popular music and a true expression of northern honesty, dynamism and authenticity. The Beatles and their

contemporaries turned rock and roll into the most popular music category of the era and gradually expanded rock and roll to never-imagined levels (Wald, 2011). The Beatles were labelled by media as Britain's answer to American pop domination (Glancy, 2019). From the beginning of the Beatles' triumph, the direction of particular British and American cultures was not unidirectional; the Beatles' music achieved a partial reversal of American pop music's cultural domination in Britain, with the phrase appearing in *New Left Review* that the Beatles' music was a "counter-colonised" response to American pop culture (Malchow, 2011).

Rock and pop sociologists often see the Beatles as representative of the further stages in the development of American rock and roll (Heilbronner, 2008). From the postwar period, many trades and traditional ways of life that had helped to define British cultural identity at a national and regional level had virtually disappeared, and Britain was progressively on the path of seeking to identify its cultural individuality (Bennett, 2000). Oded Heilbronner (2008) suggests that one of the factors in the Beatles' extraordinary success outside of Britain may have been the "Britishness" of the group, the invasion of genuinely British music into the United States, which allowed American and European audiences to see the British lifestyle in the Beatles' songs. Depicted in many of their songs are specific concepts of British cultural life (Bennett, 2000). Spin-offs of music albums also continued to conform to American social values, such as the nostalgic film Help! which once again made the Beatles successful, although the film's subtle and implicit message that the younger generation could not trust the older generation was in line with the general direction of American pop culture and the budding political radicalism of American youth (Campbell, 2020). In crossing class boundaries, popular music spread and reshaped ideas of Britishness and identity (Fuhg, 2021). The successful invasion of the Beatles represented the triumph of British culture, and like other genres (James Bond films, Swinging London fashions), it was marked by a strong sense of British pride, which was also a form of 'Britishness' (Heilbronner, 2008). This success was more of a cultural backlash from the British Empire against the United States, which was anti-revolutionary,

consensual and conservative (Kohl, 1996). Regarding contrasting influence levels, the Beatles represented Britishness more than any other postwar pop culture phenomenon (Heilbronner, 2008).

The Beatles and the management team led by Brian Epstein brought about revolutionary changes in the entertainment industry. They pioneered standalone concerts, music videos, stadium concerts, and global tours. In the 60s, no musician could integrate music and image as the Beatles did, nor could any artist create such an abundance of celebrity influence (Millard, 2012). Whenever television dramas or documentaries cover the 60s, the Beatles consistently take the leading role, acting as the era's heroes and icons (King, 2016). British singers take pride in having fan bases in the United States, with the singer Dusty Springfield expressing renewed pride in being British due to the success of Britain music scene. In May 1966, a billboard in Rockefeller Plaza declared "The British are coming", promoting the first permanent British overseas trade centre (Fuhg, 2021, p. 208). The Beatles' success in the US made the British subconsciously feel that their nation was becoming the world's entertainment capital. Following the Beatles, America started to open doors to many other British artists (Malchow, 2011).

The Beatles represented a broader trend in postwar British culture where the elite saw talented underclass youth as the solution to social maladies and the empire's decline (Heilbronner, 2008). John Lennon believed that the reason for their popularity as working-class Liverpool Lads in the beginning was class issues and that society's class prejudices existed to make a large number of youths feel that they belonged (Heilbronner, 2008). Even though the Beatles never saw themselves as part of youth culture, they did not consider themselves anti-establishment youth culture. Literary critic Terry Eagleton (1964) argued that the Beatles, more than any pop star, understood the class gap between young high school students and workers and united them against a largely unresponsive adult world. The Beatles began to take over the musical territory and social spotlight in the United States in 1964, a period of explosive social and political change. The murder of

John F. Kennedy, the beginning of the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, and the baby boomers grew into adulthood and formed society's backbone (Sweeney, 1993). Their fans became a social and political force that was a significant part of the protests against the war in Vietnam, the Civil Rights Movement, Women's Liberation, and Stonewall (Sweeney, 1993). In this decade of hope and despair, protests and demonstrations caused by racism and discrimination took place worldwide, and the crisis of nuclear weapons and the Cold War created fear in the public. Besides the threat that humanity would be destroyed at any moment, the Cold War and atomic weapons made young people feel that the cost of the war was simply too high for even the United States and the Soviet Union to afford (Campbell, 2021). Therefore, young people hoped that an ideal society could be built that was based on peace and love, not capitalism or communism (Campbell, 2021). The Beatles brought hope to Britain that it no longer needed to win on the global stage by launching wars, but through culture (Campbell, 2021).

By the mid-60s, The Beatles had become more culturally significant, transcending the bounds of a mere teenage pop music phenomenon. Drawing inspiration from various existing sources within both British and American culture, they infused different regional pop trends into their songs (Campbell, 2021). They mined the historical resources of British culture, as evidenced in their album Revolution. They explored folk, classical, and religious music traditions, as well as the theme of the old empire, particularly India, the Middle East, and West Africa (Laing, 1996). They instilled an affirmation of life into British music, and the rhythm of the melodies and lyrics ignited an emotional connection (Whiteley and Sklower, 2016). The emotional value embedded in the music products can obscure the commodity attributes and create a network between emotions and social organisation (Whiteley and Sklower, 2016). As one of the leading representatives of British Pop Art, the Beatles especially expressed nostalgia for past popular trends in their songs (Heilbronner, 2008). Their music carried a nostalgic innovation from the outset, an art style accommodating older content, such as the song Twist and Shout (1963). They were able to amalgamate styles considered by older listeners as rough and non-musical with familiar elements. These listeners could adopt new

tastes and feel the emergence of new era genres without forsaking their original styles, contributing to the popularity of the Beatles' music (Wald, 2011). As the postwar community and neighbourhood-based lifestyles gradually vanished, writer Richard Poirier wrote that Lennon and McCartney indeed lived the past in their songs (quoted in Heilbronner, 2008, p. 108). The film *A Hard Day's Night* humorously depicted the generation gap between two postwar generations and the changing British social paradigm. The 'mean ways' of Paul's grandfather versus the Beatles' humour illustrated the new generations disconnect from the war (Reiter, 2008). The Beatles skilfully retorted to the insult aimed at them and their young fans from their parent's generation using their irony and humour (Reiter, 2008). The Beatles, Elvis, and several others became known as spokespeople for defying the past (Wald, 2011). Classical pianist and historian Charles Rosen wrote that appreciating a new style is an effort to abandon and accept (Wald, 2011, cited in Rosen, 2000).

3.3.2 The Beatles' Role in Shaping Cultural Governance

In China, idols are not allowed to freely make political statements, not to mention guiding the formulation of government policies. In Western countries, it is commonplace for celebrities to be linked to policy. Throughout my research, I found this form is closely linked to the rise of the Beatles in Britain.

As a British phenomenon, the Beatles are deeply intertwined with the culture of the working-class in Northern England. Although their growth was not free from foreign influences, the Beatles marked the onset of a new phase in British pop music culture (Heilbronner, 2008). Their transition from working-class to middle-class culture blurred the cultural distinctions between them and the working-class, making the Beatles a classic example of social integration in the cultural life of 60s Britain (Evans, 2004). After 1965, The Beatles progressively became a middle-class phenomenon (Heilbronner, 2008). For example, the album *Sgt*. *Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967) fully embraced the counterculture and psychedelic movement, which was closely associated with the intellectual and artistic middle class. Beatlemania as a societal phenomenon did not have explicit

political connotations, yet the public expression by young women was radical, the scale and power of it substantial, and the challenge to established order and gender expectations unique (Rohr, 2017). The Beatles transcended the scope of pop culture, becoming a part of British political culture (Campbell, 2020). For example, Revolution was a direct response to the worldwide social unrest and revolutionary movements of 1968. British consumption patterns and commercial success gained international prominence with the Beatles' music invasion of America. Given the vast fan following, politicians spotted immense potential, hoping to borrow some of their appeal (Cloonan and Street, 1997). In Liverpool's Huyton, Harold Wilson recognised the importance of McLuhan's prophecies, astutely seizing the political advantages of pop culture idols in the new society (King, 2016). He publicly professed his love for music, winning the support of many young people. His wife, Mary Wilson, promised the public that "Harold and I are both tremendous fans of The Beatles" (Carr and Tyler, 1978, quoted in Cloonan and Street, 1997, p. 227). With his backing, the Beatles were awarded the Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE), a tactic to gain political capital from modern youth culture (Mills, 2016).

When the band emerged, commercial pop music was not known for its strong political voice, unlike genres such as folk and jazz, which had traditions of dealing with political and social issues. The band defined themselves as a group opposed to politics and politicians, although by the late 1960s they began to engage directly with political and social issues (Collins, 2014). The Beatles' songs stimulated countercultural radicals in the 1960s, such as the songs "All You Need Is Love (1967)" and Come Together (1969), which resonated strongly with young people rebelling against traditional norms (Heilbronner, 2008). Even if their music wasn't overtly political, it was enough to prompt listeners to question existing social arrangements (Collins, 2014). For instance, The Beatles' "Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da" and "Mother Nature's Son" created a three-minute utopia, inspiring people to lead better lives, embodying what McCartney referred to as a 'positive force' (Collins, 2014). Their songs were frequently repurposed or creatively adapted as political anthems, such as Lennon's "Come Together" and "Give Peace A Chance" (Collins,

2014). In the film British Sounds, Jean-Luc Godard attempted to position the Beatles at the heart of the disruptive student scene in Britain in 1968 (Heilbronner, 2008). This scenario was not limited to the Beatles or Britain alone, it is a universal phenomenon that applies to music stars and other countries. In 1965, Melody Maker reported that the Beatles contributed more to maintaining British national pride than a team of diplomats or politicians. Even if Britain did not hold the helm internationally, it led the world in pop music (Cloonan and Street, 1997). The Beatles legitimised pop music as a means of political expression, uniting two distinct and mutually unintelligible domains: politics and pop music (Collins, 2014). The political and economic attributes of pop music and its positive impact started gaining attention from politicians and political activists, with politicians indirectly promoting pop music. As the countercultural movement lost momentum and the direct link between the band's music and the radical movement faded, the Beatles gained a broader, more mainstream appeal. Their songs, which had been at the centre of the youth rebellion, gradually became part of the wider cultural fabric.

By the late 60s, rock and roll had begun to come to the forefront of political and social agendas, including statements by rock stars, thematic concerns about some rock music, music media coverage, and vocal segments of the rock audience (Simonelli, 2007). On political issues, Lennon was the most vocal, Ringo Starr was the most reticent, George Harrison was the most unwavering cynic, and as for Paul, he was derided by Lennon as being a conservative but still claimed that they shared the same political beliefs when Lennon was at his most radical (Collins, 2014). Beatles songs served as a political currency and MPs began to swap song titles to express attitudes, such as Tony Blair in 1990s, leader of the Labour Party, who thought that *Help!* (1965) or *Hello, Goodbye* (1967) were appropriate Desert Island Disc for Leader of the Opposition (Hansard, 2002, quoted in Collins, 2014, p. 305).

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, politicians generally viewed the Beatles as inciting crime rather than calming it (Collins, 2020). LSD (Lysergic acid diethylamide) evolved from a psychotropic drug to part of the counterculture in the 1960s, with many artists and musicians using LSD in their compositions. The psychedelic and pleasurable sensations induced by LSD have led to a growing market (Glancy, 2019). The Beatles dropped many hints about their LSD use from 1965 onwards, such as the film Magical Mystery Tour. Lennon's and McCartney's attitudes towards Christianity and psychedelic drugs gradually became a matter of intense media debate. "Tomorrow Never Knows" from the album Revolver was an influential song in psychedelic and electronic music, with lyrics from the psychedelic book The Psychedelic Experience: A Manual Based on the Tibetan Book of the Dead (Leary, Alpert and Metzner, 1964) and Lennon also drew inspiration from the fact that he used hallucinogens. In the Encyclopedia of Popular Music, Colin Larkin (2006) declares that the song is considered "the most effective evocation of the LSD experience ever". In August 1966, Melody Maker used the 'Drug Rock' term to describe the growing number of records featuring drug lyrics, psychedelic artwork and trip-hop (Collins, 2020). In the same year LSD was declared illegal. The main reasons that compelled politicians to make such a decision were due to the dramatic increase in the types of drugs on the market and the rising number of arrests and convictions (Collins, 2019).

At the 1967 Tory party conference, Conservative Quintin Hogg harshly condemned the behaviour of "weakness, sophistry and ignorance" that the Beatles had once displayed in an advert sponsored in The Times questioning cannabis laws (Times, 1967, quoted in Collins, 2020, p. 167). Conservative MP Bernard Braine (1967) noted that not a day went by that the media did not report on police raids on seedy clubs frequented by teenagers, pop stars and drugs and cases of arrests for drugs (cited in Collins, 2019). The band members' drug use was condemned and the media argued that if the Beatles' lack of self-discipline and egocentrism were left unchecked, then it would lead to the decline and demise of all that Britain had stood for in the past (Lunn and Lean, 1969). By this time politicians generally had a negative attitude towards the Beatles, who were seen as inciting crime rather than

suppressing it (Collins, 2020). Towards 1970, Lennon's call for the 'abolition of all kinds of censorship' and the legalisation of cannabis alerted the government. Alice Bacon, the Home Secretary, was alarmed by the Beatles' and Epstein's questioning traditional values, such as openly talking about their experiences with psychedelic, and strongly condemned their justification of psychedelic use. The government became concerned that the Beatles' drug use would cause many young people to change their social values and develop a habit of using psychedelics, with young people always taking the words of pop stars seriously (Alan, 1968). A doctor in Birmingham blamed Tomorrow Never Knows and other LSD-related songs for the sharp rise in LSD consumption (Collins, 2020, p. 105). The government began to outlaw unlicensed radio stations, pop festivals and raves, and in the name of 'periodic intervention rather than sustained attack' commenced to censor offensive lyrics in conjunction with broadcasters and music companies, A Day in the Life was banned from the BBC. The Beatles' debates on drugs, narcotics, radio piracy and youth issues became points of interest to politicians about the Beatles and became arguments that Parliament could draw on (Collins, 2014). Pop songs gradually became a political medium and pop music rituals transformed into political events.

3.3.3 The Lasting Impact of the Beatles and the Swinging Sixties on Contemporary Culture

The Beatles phenomenon created a lasting impact, with popular music becoming a site for debates about youth, sexual orientation, gender, race, identity, celebrity power, and its impact in the decades that followed (King, 2016). Songs written by Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, and the Beatles became anthems for antiwar demonstrations and civil rights movements, which promoted the desire for free expression and freedom from social norms. Young people wanted to create a new society based on ideals that rejected the premise of capitalism and communism in favour of simple concepts such as peace and love. The slogan 'Make Love Not War' began influencing various artistic fields such as fine arts, music, fashion, and film.

With the advent of hallucinogens, British bands began to take control of their fate, creating some of the most urgent and exciting music of the 20th century.

Beatles biographer Philip Norman (2011) refers to the Beatles as the Swinging Sixties incarnate (p. 22). People describe the achievements made by the Beatles as revolutionary, from fashion style changes to the way music was produced to revolutionising the structure of the entertainment world. They made pop music more accessible and gave young musicians more legitimacy. By the end of the 60s, the status of pop stars had increased dramatically while rock and roll became mainstream entertainment (Millard, 2012). The Beatles' influence in the 60s was unimaginable and influential in modern times. Under the Beatles, Britain established itself as the centre of the pop world with a wealth of talent. As British Pop Art became a hot topic in the gallery world, a new generation of fashion designers, models and photographers followed Mary Quant's footsteps and created the classic scene of Swinging London (MacDonald, 2007). Time Magazine attributed the classlessness, originality, informality, energy and anti-Victorianism in Swinging London to the Beatles (Collins, 2020). Success brought them wealth, big houses, Aston Martins and other things that only the rich had, and even the Beatles had the right to still shop after hours at Harrod's, a privilege only enjoyed by royalty (King, 2016). In 1965, Beatles were awarded the Membership of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE) in the Queen's Birthday Honours List, marking their fame's peak (Lewisohn, 1992; Collins, 2020).



Figure 35. The Beatles showing their MBE Insignias in forecourt after receiving them from the Queen. Resource: PA Images / Alamy Stock Photo

Music newspapers saw the honour as representing official recognition of the Beatles' national and generational identity reimagining, with Melody Maker claiming that they had "rejuvenated the whole country" (Collins, 2020, p. 71). However, this caused resentment among many of those previously honoured, with many believing that the award had nothing to do with the Beatles' achievements and everything to do with Harold Wilson, but Wilson later explained that he suggested the award in recognition of the Beatles' social value of "getting kids off the streets" (Collins, 2020). Moreover, the Beatles had long acted as ambassadors for Britain and were chosen to represent the country to the rest of the world in the 1967 'Our World satellite broadcast' (Collins, 2020). European audiences from the BBC placed the Beatles above the Queen and Churchill as the British figures they most wanted to meet, and Madame Tussauds called the Beatles a major attraction (Collins, 2020). The international reputation established by the Beatles gave the British brand an opportunity that could be reinvented, and it could be argued that the Beatles recreated the British image abroad (Collins, 2020). This success also drove Britain economic market, with the Beatles generating a substantial economic boost.

The Beatles, as a catalyst in the accelerated development of the 20th-century subculture, stripped away the violence, ignorance, inferiority complex, monotony of world cynicism, and the solemnity of art from the world of pop (Nuttall, Field and Sinclair, 2018).

In the early 60s, the Beatles opening the door to rock and pop music (Marwick, 2011). Records were the best medium for the Beatles and other youth idols to expand their influence in the 60s. Various music-related rankings and charts served as ways for pop music groups to maintain and enhance their reputation, but the Beatles had another vehicle; album covers. Serving as spokespersons for the world's counterculture youth movement, the Beatles, from the late 60s, innovatively transformed the functional nature of music album covers (e.g., Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band album designed by artist Peter Blake, as shown in Figure 36) (Reiter, 2008). Their album covers were considered pioneering in visual and aesthetic attributes (Martinelli, 2022). They shifted the purpose of pop music album covers from showcasing performers to assisting in conveying the album's concept (Macan, 1997). Their innovative and imaginative designs provided early momentum for the expansion of the graphic design industry (Inglis, 2001). Over half of the Beatles' album covers featured their faces as the primary content, which was the classical look. In 1967, people were becoming a little tired of the swinging London scene, just as the Beatles appeared in Sgt Pepper in their colourful outfits. Meanwhile, "Summer of Love" (Hippie Culture and LSD counterculture movement) which appeared at this time added to the psychedelic impression of the album. Sgt Pepper is considered to be one of the most pivotal, mixed-media artefacts of the 60's, with albums filled with music that had a particular originality and strangeness, packaged in a highly original and creative way (Walker, 1998). The album shows the Beatles exploring LSD and represents a new phase in the cultural development of the 60s. The significance of the Beatles at this point was no longer an album, it had become an ongoing Anglo-American dialogue, and almost all West Coast psychedelic bands quoted Sgt. Pepper as a milestone in the development of their music (Malchow, 2011).

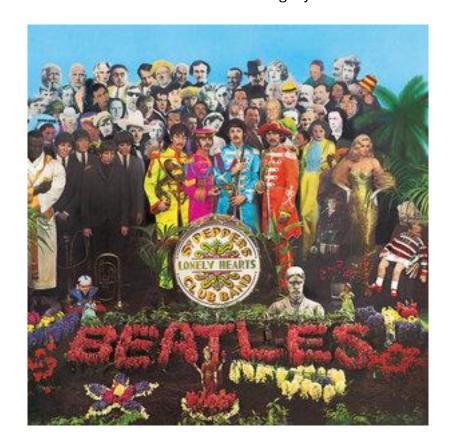


Figure 36. Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band album cover (1967)

The *Sgt. Pepper* album cover won the Grammy for the best album cover of 1967, and the drama critic Kenneth Tynan (1967) described this album as "a decisive moment in the history of Western civilisation" (quoted in MacDonald, 2007, p.242). The Beatles elevated the cultural significance of pop music to an inconceivable level. Wilfrid Mellers (1973) noted that this album detached the Beatles from the pop music industry, establishing their world and standards.

Following *Sgt. Pepper*, the *White* album released in November 1968, stands in stark contrast to the psychedelic explosion of *Sgt. Pepper*. The *White* album cover designed by Richard Hamilton, a member of IG (as shown in Figure 37). Before that, album covers reflected the music it contained as well as the intentions of the performers. However, as the 'White' album covered a wide range of music including rock, doo wop, blues, folk, rock, country, pop, psychedelic, avant-garde and concert hall (Inglis, 2001). Therefore, Richard made the cover almost completely blank with a "limited edition" number on the outside and the band's name highlighted in a small, simple font, which is the only time the album does not

show any of the members. The minimalist design was in keeping with the spirit of the counterculture movement of the late 1960s, which emphasized purity, simplicity and introspection (Carducci, 2008).



Figure 37. White album cover (1968). Design by Richard Hamilton

3.3.4 Beatlemania Fervour and gender influence

British cultural theorists Stuart Hall and Paddy Whannel (2018, p.34) highlight that girls are often apprehensive towards things that are overly different. Male characters in Hollywood films are typically characterized by robust muscles, a healthy complexion, and professions generally perceived as predominantly maleoriented, such as police officers and soldiers (Sweeney, 1993). However, these images often align with parental values and can seem oppressive to them. So their idols need to possess certain feminine traits and should not be threatening. These idols are essentially the idealized realizations of ordinary adolescent life (Driscoll, 1999). In the context of feminist theory, Constance Penley (2013) considers idols as an essential aspect of female fans' fantasies, where idols are forever unattainable, yet exist in reality (cited in Sweeney, 1993, p. 2). Fan idolatry serves to fill an inner void of desire, with The Beatles satisfying this fantasy through

images to gaze upon, music to listen to, songs to sing, and collectables to amass. These idols provide fans with sexual pleasure and sexual tension. In these fantasies, young women's desires can be realised and expressed, serving as a form of relief. Especially for girls deprived of certain rights in reality, these fantasies offer an arena for enacting actions they dare not or are not permitted to perform, a form of imagination (Sweeney, 1993).

Thomas Doherty (2010, p. 47) pointed out in his book "Teenagers and Teenpics" that teenagers were the most populous group in the 1950s, possessing ample funds and a keen sense of self-awareness, a mindset distinctly different from their parents. Adults consistently harbour anxiety towards teenagers, often defining their behaviours as criminal and feeling a need to monitor and restrict them (Thurschwell, 2022). The discrepancy and conflict between teenagers and their parents' values propel them towards youth idols, often associated with music, attracting teenagers in a somewhat peculiar manner. Loving things that parents hate can prompt teenagers to get pleasure from rebelling and feel the illusion of approval (Sweeney, 1993). The late 1950s to early 60s was a period that girls were considered symbols of modernity and consumerism (Singleton, 2017, p. 119). Despite this backdrop, young women sometimes had to defy familial expectations due to these activities (Feldman-Barrett, 2021). When families have certain concerns and expectations about their children's safety and virtue, society leans towards a trend where parents monitor their daughters' leisure activities more strictly than their sons' (Feldman-Barrett, 2021). In the stage when young women are controlled by their parents, male pop culture idols become integral parts of young girls' lives, with records mainly serving as a medium for girls to enjoy their life in their bedrooms (Cura, 2011). The popular discourse of "modern girl" gradually permeates much of the pop culture consumed by young women (Feldman-Barrett, 2013, p. 1). The female consumer market has transformed the male-dominated market structure, and the considerable spending power of women has led commercial companies to explore women's material needs and psychological expectations (Warwick, 2013).

Idols usually have fanatical followers, admirers and are often made up of women, gay men or other disempowered groups (Sweeney, 1993). The terms groupies, fangirls and shippers are three terms society often uses to describe the feminised culture and female fans. The term groupies emerged in the 60s to refer to devoted fans of male musicians, and was also used to express the idea that female fans were more enthusiastic about having sex with their pop idols than the music itself (Cline, 1992). Groupies have strong gender characteristics, such as being women only, and a man would not be called a groupie even if he liked a female artist (Davies, 2001). The public generally assumes that all women are potential groupies and that women only listen to male performers they find sexually attractive (Davies, 2001). It is widely recognised that all women are potential Groupies, and the rock stars' wives and girlfriends are also defined as Groupies, like Yoko Ono who is viewed with disdain and ridicule by the general public (Davies, 2001). Moreover fangirls are mainly used to mock the consumer culture of young female fans, while shippers refer to fans who are interested in fictional romantic relationships (Gerrard, 2021; Williams, 2011). Besides this, Beatles fans are often referred to as 'teenyboppers', a subculture exclusive to early teenagers, a term Norma Coates (2003) refers to as being reserved for young women. The term is often pejorative and is defined as a young teenager, usually a girl, who is keen on the latest fashions, such as clothes and pop music (Davies, 2001). Norma Coates (2003) argued that this relationship is part of a complex web of gender, authenticity and consumerism, such as artists needing the affection of girls for their work to become famous and noticed, but when their work involves some severe specific judgement, the affection of girls is transformed into a burden. The Beatles' early music albums were not overly groundbreaking, but the innovative, earth-shattering albums that followed continued to receive some ostracism because of these screaming girls, demonstrating the complex, almost imprisoning politics of gender, fandom, and popular music (Rohr, 2017).

Elvis Presley was an idol for the first wave of Baby Boomers, while the Beatles became the idols for the second, catapulting them to the pinnacle due to the sheer number of this demographic group. Prior to the Beatles, Elvis Presley, with his

sexual allure, and Frank Sinatra, with his romantic melancholy, captured the hearts of many female audiences (Cura, 2011). Unlike Elvis, the Beatles didn't implicitly gyrate their bodies (Ehrenreich, Hess, and Jacobs, 2002). As novel youth idols, they balanced the new masculine traits while maintaining the characteristics typical of young idols. They visually reconstructed their unique male image (Sweeney, 1993). An anonymous fan stated that they were completely different from previous teenage idols and bands, who were perceived as fake, sexy, and gloomy (Harris, 1964).

The Beatles in the 60s, stirred considerable psychological and social tumult among girls of that era, positioning themselves in the gap between accepted male images and female norms (Sweeney, 1993). Initially, the Beatles presented a cleancut, non-rebellious image. In 1964, they innovated their image, attracting the public with their androgynous appearance. Their relatively long hair deviated from the traditional male image, challenging the traditional heterosexual object image (Cura, 2011). The Beatles embodied both male and female traits, paradoxically redefining masculinity. This softer masculine image attracted the audience's attention, and their display of a unified collective image further enhanced their appeal to young girls (Cura, 2011). In the film A Hard Day's Night, they wore slim fitting suits with black ties and in some scenes collarless jackets. Totally different from the lavish outfits of early rock stars Elvis Presley and Chuck Berry. They spoke with a thick Liverpool accent, often employing wordplay in their dialogue. This film was made explicitly for adolescent girls, with visuals designed to elicit physical responses from female viewers, as if they were in front of an idol performance. Young women often viewed the Beatles with a sexual undertone.

The British media have used the term Beatlemania to describe teenagers' reaction to the musical presence, particular personality and social significance projected by pop music from the port city of Liverpool, a reaction that may seem hysterical but is widely welcomed by teenagers (Gould, 2014). 'Hysterical' is derived from the Greek word hystera, meaning womb, so hysterical is considered a female-specific symptom (Rohr, 2017). Although there are many types in the base of Beatles fans,

Beatlemania is a gendered term used to describe the reactions of primarily female fans (Rohr, 2017). When women could gaze upon men as objects of desire and derive pleasure, these idols posed a threat to the dominant order (Sweeney, 1993). In the male-dominated media and public sphere, girls and women's behaviour towards the Beatles was a manifestation of emotional outbursts, and in Matt Hills' terminology, Beatlemaniacs were synonymous with 'besotted female fans' (Hills, 2007). Few people want to understand these crazy girls. Young girls kicking, screaming, gyrating and hissing at an age when they should be seen as ladylike, these girls gathered in public places to challenge and disregard social rules and conventions. Meanwhile, their status as fans brought about feelings of eccentricity and rebellion (Rohr, 2017). Some argue that the girls' screams only prove that they are not interested in music and that true fans should be unresponsive and dull. Screaming reinforces gender categorisation and adds to the argument that "Beatles fans as silly girls and mindless consumers" (Rohr, 2017, p. 7). The magazine Beatles' Round the World defended Beatlemaniacs to a certain extent in their 1964 article, which was entitled "Why Do They Call It Beatlemania? Surely It Should Be Called Beatlesense?" (Feldman-Barrett, 2021, p. 49). This article implied that Beatlemania was not some sort of mental illness, but instead that it was healthy and justified for girls to find out how they felt about themselves.

The intense devotion of young female fans during the height of Beatlemania was not merely a symptom of mass hysteria or commodified fandom, as often caricatured in media narratives. Rather, this collective emotional expression can be understood as a form of gendered cultural participation. Drawing on Angela McRobbie's (1991) work on girls' magazines and youth culture, the emotional investments of young women in The Beatles can be viewed as a semi-private form of resistance and identity formation. Within the confines of a still-conservative postwar gender order, fandom offered a space where young women could explore romantic desire, bodily autonomy, and emotional intensity that were otherwise socially policed or trivialised.

The noise, innocence, hysteria and extreme excitement and desperation of Beatlemania was a scene that could only be seen in the 60s (Sweeney, 1993). Beatlemania offered a new experience for girls, where the concert venue acted as a place of expression and release, where girls were allowed to show off to their hearts' content in front of their idols by screaming, fainting and touching and these physical acts also created a social behaviour through the widespread craze (Sweeney, 1993). The sounds and visuals of the Beatles induced certain 'disorders' in adolescent females, causing them to scream, run, cry, faint, fetishise and masturbate (Sweeney, 1993). Women's reaction to the Beatles and their frenzied performance in public ignored many of the rules, they rejected gender constraints and the girls' screams symbolised the identity they constructed for themselves (Rohr, 2017). As tens of thousands of young women used screams to signify their sexuality, one cannot help but use the word revolutionary to explain Beatlemania (Millard, 2012). In the presence of the Beatles, girls could gain a sense of being uninhibited and they were allowed to be more confident (Rohr, 2017; Mills, 2019). In Lacan's Feminine Sexuality (1985), language becomes a substitute for male desire in a system where woman does not exist. A woman's desire would only be the desire to be desired, which in real life would be masculinised or hysterical for expressing active sexuality (Bradby, 2005). In the article "Beatles Reaction Puzzles Even Psychologists (1964)" in Science News Letters, unknown psychologists state that adolescents are "going through a period of intense emotional and physical growth period", which leaves them with a certain need for expressiveness, with boys using sports as an outlet and girls only being able to release themselves by screaming and fainting at the Beatles (Lewis, 2002, p. 90). Susan J. Douglas (1994) suggests that mass-mediated figures like The Beatles offered adolescent girls a symbolic outlet for their desires, anxieties, and aspirations, especially in a period when mainstream feminism had not yet provided clear public discourse for female empowerment. Women at the time talked about how the Beatles made them feel alive and they were transported to a completely different world (Berman, 2008). Girls expressed their love for the Beatles and a range of complex emotions with screams and chants and redrew the boundaries of gender (Rohr, 2017). For the

general public, Beatlemania was remembered less for featuring the Beatles and more for screaming girls (Douglas, 1994). The girls who were seen and heard on the streets, in newspapers, in magazines and on television formed an integral part of the visual and sonic record of the 60s (Rohr, 2017). Beatlemania, as a frenzied manifestation of collective power, was integral to the gender revolution of the 60s, and their challenge to gender conventions, the relaxation of sexual constraints was part of this era revolutionary (Rohr, 2017).

3.4 The Birth of Nostalgia: The Beatles and the Emotional Afterlife of the 1960s

3.4.1 The Beatles became the beginning of nostalgia

After Beatlemania, counterculture and Swinging London and the realisation of ideas in the 60s, things were suddenly changing in British society. There were so many incredible crises in the 1970s, two devastating miners' strikes, mass work stoppages, regular power cuts, compulsory three-day working, the 1973 oil price hike, hyperinflation, the pound crisis, the hung parliament and weak minority government (Robinson et al., 2017). Britain collapsed as a welfare state and a mixed economy under the double whammy of internal contradictions and external challenges that did not respect the country's borders. Successive economic crises seemed to overwhelm the British government, acute industrial unrest, political polarisation and a low-level civil war (Pemberton, 2009). The relationship between nostalgia and nationalist-racist politics is serious and tense. Richard Weight (2013), in his book Patriots: National Identity in Britain 1940-2000, describes Britain as divided in the 1970s, with changes in EEC membership, striking workers, Ireland and class affiliation producing a series of conceptual fractures and seeming breakdown of the postwar consensus. At this point there appeared a large void, and the void leaked out something that had otherwise disappeared. This empty world is not supported by concrete things, so people develop a very strong self-consciousness. People often experience a sense of disappointment, guilt or shame, and nostalgia is likely to be the most positive in adapting to societal changes, helping to restore confidence in the self (Davis, 2011).

The 1970s troubles revitalised interest in alternative solutions for people who hoped that through change life could return to normal. Frequent political topicalities appeared on newspapers, documenting the tensions and changes in society, whilst the liberalism that had emerged in the postwar period was challenged and regulated (Forster and Harper, 2009). Labour and Conservatives alternate in government, but the country still faces unemployment, racial tensions,

the troubles in Northern Ireland, and the 1978 'Winter of Discontent', shown in Figure 38 (Forster and Harper, 2009). It was not until 1979 that the Conservative Party, led by Margaret Thatcher, came to power, which signalled a complete change in the shape of British society. Margaret Thatcher's policies completely changed the structure of the country's economy, with around 80 percent of the economy being privately owned and operated (Reitan, 2003, p. 9). Privatisation sold state assets to the private sector and things that used to belong to the people were sold to the highest bidder, such as railways, gas and water. The country began to be sold off and people began to grow nostalgic for the society that was developed after the war.



Figure 38. Winter of discontent in 1979 (Beckett, 2021, October 1)

Heaps of rubbish piled up in Leicester Square, this enormous crisis signals a colossal defeat for the British left.

People's nostalgia for postwar life began to influence musicians' compositions, and this nostalgic act of fantasy allowed music creators to decorate and stitch over painful historical memories, creating new content and revelling in perceived past glories (Cox, 2018). Writer Rob Young (2011) in his book *Electric Eden:*Unearthing Britain's Visionary Music describes it this way, British folk rock is music

born out of the struggle between the progressive push and the nostalgia pull, and in the late 1960s many rock musicians used the country's war ravaged past as inspiration for their compositions (p. 16). Were the 60s a truly happy time? I would argue that the strong contrast drives people to think the 60s were happy. In the 1960s the world was filled with fear of nuclear weapons, poverty persisted, and much inequity existed. But after a strong comparison to the 70s, people still think it was a happy time. When there is a lot of unhappiness, the dullness of life, which was once not even a happy time, is glorified as happiness. Time and nostalgia hide the scars of history, and nostalgia often arises from trying to find comfort and security in a bygone era (Medhurst, 2002). Bartoletti (2010, p. 24) refers to this sense of nostalgia as a typical modern ailment, a longing for a particular era rather than a specific place, and the temporal aspect of nostalgia cannot truly be recreated (cited in Kinsella and Peters, 2022, p. 42). Also relying on this strong form of nostalgia, people look for substitutes or replacements for some kind of spiritual loss in the retro markets. I would argue that this unstoppable commodity temptation could be called as a form of self-spiritual compensation.

In the contemporary era, memories and nostalgia are transformed into living commodities (Mills, 2019). Epstein died in 1967, and in 1968 the Beatles established their own record management company, Apple Corps. The businesses included recording, publishing, electronics, film, studios and retail shops, which they hoped would generate innovative cultural products and technological projects. Artists can give meaning to art brands by forming alliances with brands. Pop music has created many global brands that transcend class boundaries (Leaver and Schmidt, 2010). After the Beatles disbanded, Apple Corps began to manage both the Beatles brand and legacy and open up a channel of communication for consumers (Inglis, 2000, cited in King, 2009, p. 24). Epstein's focus was primarily on the production and sale of records, and after Epstein's departure, the company began to see the 'potential' for more comprehensive commercial development. 60s Beatles demonstrated a tense postwar transition from one way of life to another (MacDonald, 2007). Pianist Billy Joel once said the Beatles' arrival was a fresh start (Gopnik, 2021). In the 1980s, the Beatles emerged

as a commodity and brand in the nostalgia-drive market. In preparation for its continuation, it was repackaged and rebranded for the next commercially supported wave of nostalgia. At the moment, this emotional attachment compensates for the fact that people's hearts were empty in the 70's, that Britain's culture had been hollowed out. The masses have insecurities within them due to political wavering and widespread strikes that leave people distrustful of the state. These anxieties from the inside cannot be documented and detached, therefore the public is willingly surrendering to nostalgic brands (Womack and Kapurch, 2016).

In the 1990s, the value of Beatles memorabilia continued to rise, with large and small collectors searching for rare items from the group's past, and auctions and private sales of Beatles-related items regularly making headlines. These souvenirs have attained a high status, and their significance is further enhanced through the shared experiences and interpretations of fans (Leaver and Schmidt, 2010, p. 112). For example, in very niche markets, John Lennon's tooth or Michael Jackson's hair, fished from a drain, were sold at auction (BBC news, 2011, cited in Roberts, 2014, p. 271). The Beatles are a mainstay of cultural reinvention, like the popular reinvention of 20th century superheroes, with each generation adding to the creative musical and cultural forces based on its own experiences (Womack and O'Toole, 2021). In 2004, Beatles' Apple Corps published a book for children, Yellow Submarine, which initiated a new generation of Beatles fans into the 'enlightenment movement'. George Harrison argues that Yellow Submarine is an effective way of arousing the interest of the younger generation and that it is content that children of every generation will enjoy (Hieronimus, 2002). Britpop's re-exploration of what was covered in the Beatles' music is nostalgia for an imagined past, and this nostalgia is a constant presence in British culture (Adams, 2008; Bennett, 2000). Psychologist Clay Routledge (2015) states that nostalgia is one of the most common emotional experiences when people are listening to music. Nostalgia is not just making us look back, but bridges the gap in time by dragging the past into the present. The younger generation of Beatles fans have not lived through those times, but they can still be nostalgic. They communicate with

the past by listening to music that brings the past into the present, and the Beatles are constantly being reimagined as something new (Womack and O'Toole, 2021). Beatles fan culture shows no sign of decline in the 21st century, with fans being active consumers and producers of new knowledge (Womack and Kapurch, 2016). Writer Peter Doggett (2010) wrote in *You Never Give Me Your Money* that we know it is impossible to get the Beatles together, but we are still seduced. As fans, we constantly try to move the clock forward and get them together. Fans express their drive to reimagine the Beatles through their practices and affirm the significance of the Beatles' existence (Womack and Kapurch, 2016). Jeffrey Roessner (2016, p. 222) argued that the Beatles remain "a dominant historical and musical force, and the most compelling rock and roll band we will likely see". He believes that the Beatles' future is hopeful and promising credit goes to the energy and intelligence of fans.

3.4.2 The Beatles' music persevere process

The Beatles' songs had a light that lit up the world and the public revelled in the freedom that the Beatles evoked, but the Beatles were imprisoned by this freedom. They soon realised that they would never be able to avoid being compared to the heights of their youth, even if they were inspired (Doggett, 2009). However, from 1967 onwards, they were chained together, in the legal sense of the word. Due to the death of their loyal mentor Brian Epstein, their finances began to go haywire, even though Brian Epstein has appointed specialized assistants to help them in advance. People more experienced and less loyal than Epstein began to take control of the Beatles' business interests, and this was the economic crisis that plagued the Beatles for decades. Beginning in the late 1970s, the exploitation of the Beatles' name started a seemingly healthy industry that fed on the Beatles like leeches or crows (Doggett, 2009). Tessler (2014, p. 50) claimed that a grey market behind the Beatles included "legitimate but unauthorised Beatles projects", developed, produced and released by legitimate third parties but without by the former Beatles; and authorized projects (those developed, produced and sanctioned by the former group). Before the Beatles disbanded, piracy was a

complete bypass of intellectual property issues, with spontaneous distribution and sale of pirated records, collectables, and various other derivative items with little regard for legal ownership or licensing. But after the breakup, the number of pirated Beatles albums in circulation skyrocketed. Many projects featuring the Beatles remain massively popular, and there is still a vast market for them and their music worldwide (Tessler, 2014). Such as illegal tapes made by fans at concerts where these people sitting in the audience record the concert on tape recorders and then make them into records. Despite these bootleg records' lack of narrative history, they have symbolism value for Beatles fans disenfranchised by the breakup (Marshall, 2004, cited in Tessler, 2010, p. 58). Even though they all knew that the content would not allow the band to reunite and that the records were illegal, they were still willing to do so. Even though the bootleg videos and songs that have appeared have garnered a lot of negative criticism, these allow fans to construct a new, popular scholarship of the band, giving us another way of understanding the Beatles, especially for fans in the digital age (Jeffrey, 2016).

When the Beatles' music became heavily used by outsiders, Beatles members began to shift from negativity to active consideration of effectively utilising the Beatles' songs, recordings and other assets. The companies controlling the Beatles' major intellectual property assets began to crack down on individuals and companies that illegally trafficked in the Beatles' copyrighted material and to administer the Beatles' musical legacy (Tessler, 2014). Apple Corps began officially filing lawsuits against the producers of Broadway musical revue Beatlemania in 1979, although former drummer Pete Best complained that in his work for the film The Birth of the Beatles, it was often assumed that they were making money from it, but they were not making a cent. In addition to Apple Corps, the Beatles' former record labels Electric and Musical Industries (EMI) and Sony ATV, the former of which was sold to Vivendi's Universal Music Group in 2011 due to debt problems, and the latter had decided to dispose a large number of its music rights holdings in the 1980s. Michael Jackson acquired these rights through auction bidding in 1985 and bought ATV music. In 2008, Jackson made a partnership deal with Sony due to financial problems and merged his ATV music rights holdings with Sony's music

rights company to form Sony ATV. McCartney and Sony ATV went to court at one point based on copyright issues, they reached a settlement in 2017, and as far as copyright issues go, it remains a complex topic. At a stage when the band members were reluctant to commercialise their musical assets, grey market entrepreneurs and Beatles stakeholders began to collaborate on rearticulating and presenting band-related content to fans. Naturally, these projects were only beneficial to the Beatles, and if the projects failed, the Beatles could criticise them as crass business practices or in poor taste. If the projects were successful, the Beatles would be praised for not raking in their legacy, and these successful projects could also serve as a template for legacy preservation (Tessler, 2014).

The Dawn of Nostalgia: Post-Breakup Era and Early Preservation Efforts (1970s - 1980s)

Table 1. Beatles History Timeline after 70s

Date	Event	Details
10 April 1970	McCartney announces departure from the	Marks the beginning of the end for the band, signaling McCartney's split from the group.
	Beatles.	
29 Dec 1974	Official breakup of the Beatles	Follows years of legal disputes since McCartney's announcement, formalizing the end of
	announced.	the band.
1970	Conception of the Beatles' Anthology	Originally titled 'The Long and Winding Road,' this project aims to document the band's
	project.	history.
1980	John Lennon releases 'Double Fantasy.'	Marks Lennon's return to music after five years of retirement.
8 Dec 1980	John Lennon is shot outside The Dakota in	Lennon's assassination by Mark David Chapman shocks fans around the world
	NYC.	
1995	Release of the Beatles Anthology	Part of the Anthology project, initiated by Neil Aspinall after the Beatles reached a legal
	documentary.	settlement in 1995.
1998	Beatles voted 'Music of the Millennium' by	Highlighting the enduring legacy and influence of the Beatles' music.
	British Channel 4 audience.	
2000	Release of the 'Beatles Anthology' book.	Accompanies the Anthology album series, featuring interviews and details from the band
		members.
14 June 2011	Digital remastering and release of the	Ensures the music of the Beatles is preserved in high quality and accessible to a new
	Beatles' Anthology albums on iTunes.	generation.

Resource: Author's own

On 10 April 1970, McCartney stated in a press release that he was no longer with the band, and it was not until 29 December 1974 that the band announced its official break-up, due to legal disputes following his announcement. During the period 1970-1980, many Beatles-themed musicals and theatre projects emerged. Examples include Robert Stigwood's *Sgt. Pepper Lonely Hearts Club Band*, Willy Russell's 1974 stage production of *John, Paul, George, Ringo and Bert*, 1978's

Beatlemania! and Eric Idle's production of *Rutles* (Tessler, 2010). These musicals and plays served as a narrative form depicting aspects of the Beatles' history, life, and career, making the Beatles more acceptable and popular in popular culture (Tessler, 2010).

After they broke up, stories about the group began to multiply. Barry Miles (2001) notes that when the band broke up there were only one or two books written about them; now there is an average of one new book published every three weeks. It is estimated that there are over 8,000 books alone written about the Beatles (Brocken, 2015). Before the Beatles broke up, apart from the memoir A Cellarful of Noise (1964) by Brian Epstein, there was only The Beatles Authorised Biography (1968) by Hunter Davies and Love Me Do: The Beatles' Progress (1963) by Michael Braun, all three of these authors have in common their intimate access to the lives of the Beatles. After the breakup there was a proliferation of books, but most of them were in the form of picture books. Among these are Mark Lewisohn's The Complete Beatles Chronicle (London, Pyramid, 1992) and Kevin Howlett's The Beatles at the BEEB, The Story of Their Radio Career (London, BBC, 1982) valuable sourcebooks. In 1976, the defunct fan publication Beatles Book Monthly reprinted all the issues from 1963 (Badman, 2001; quoted in Tessler, 2010, p. 179). In attempting to analyse the factors that have contributed to the apparent increase in literature relating to the Beatles I found that there were photographs, letters or tapes appearing that had never been seen before at regular intervals. This is a strong incentive to spark new interest and new publications. In additional, the death of members and anniversaries also contributed to the increase in the publications of books.

Writer Douglas B Holt (2004) sees their breakup as a catalyst and 'cultural disruption' that forced people to start rethinking the place of Beatles music and its role in the nation. The Beatles' music was part of a transnational collective community and part of the modern DNA of the West (Engelskircher, 2021, p. 13). From their rise to fame, the Beatles have significantly expanded from a musical group to a highly mediated and circulated product (King, 2009). The Beatles hoped

that Apple Corps could do cultural politics and cultural industries, with Paul McCartney calling this goal a kind of Western communism (Burrows, 1996).

The Loss of John Lennon

After the Beatles ended in turmoil, Lennon embarked on a solo career, producing albums such as Imagine and Mind Games. After another five years of retirement, Lennon returned to the music scene in 1980 with Double Fantasy. On the night of 8 December 1980, Lennon was shot several times by Mark David Chapman outside The Dakota, the apartment building where he lived in New York City. Fans, artists from different genres of music and global leaders had expressed their shock and grief.

Revolution in Retrospect: The Beatles in the Digital Revolution (1990s - 2000s)

During this period, the legacy of the Beatles underwent a digital transformation. The advent of the internet and digital technology greatly influenced the way people consumed and celebrated the Beatles' music. The release of remastered CDs of classic Beatles albums brought their music to a new generation of listeners. Online platforms facilitated the emergence of a global community of fans, allowing for a broader and more interactive engagement with the music and history of the Beatles. This era has been crucial in cementing the Beatles as timeless idols of the digital age, demonstrating their enduring influence on contemporary music and culture. Jeffrey Roessner (2016), assessing the fans of the digital age, noted that they are voicing their opinions in new modes of expression and enquiry, and that these digital fans have always been crucial in sustaining the band's legacy, from the 60s onwards.

Re-releases, tributes, and the eventual Anthology project

The Anthology project was a large scale retrospective that provided fans with a glimpse into the familiar and unknown aspects of the Beatles. The project was first conceived in 1970 and was tentatively titled *The Long and Winding Road*. Three double albums (*Anthology 1*, *Anthology 2*, *and Anthology 3*) featuring rarities,

deleted albums, and live performances. The Beatles Anthology books in the same series were published in 2000.



Figure 39. "Anthology 1", "Anthology 2", and "Anthology 3". Resource: album covers In the 1998 British Channel 4 television series broadcast, the Beatles were voted by the audience "Music of the Millennium" (Cohen, 2017, p. 170).

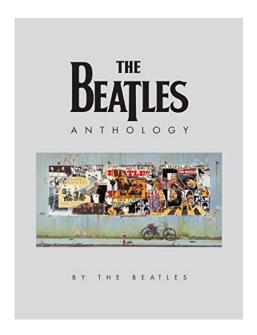


Figure 40. Book: Beatles Anthology. Publisher: Ullstein Buchverlage GmbH & Co. KG / Ullstein Tas

The cultural and commercial values of the Beatles' history are interdependent (Tessler, 2010). Three nodes reveal how the Beatles became a commercial and commercialised process. These are the breakup of the group in 1970, the assassination of John Lennon in 1980, and the release of the Anthology documentary in 1995. The Beatles Anthology was one of the first projects initiated by Neil Aspinall after the Beatles reached a legal settlement (Reiter, 2008). It was

also the most high-profile project developed by Apple Corps about the Beatles in the 1990s, which included a television documentary series, a book and a threevolume album collection covering the band's history (The Beatles in the 1990s, 2017). The media hype generated by its announcement resembled the Beatlemania of the mid-60s, with Newsweek magazine describe "a multimedia campaign that will make for the most fearsome flood of product since the days of the Beatle wig" (Newsweek, 1995). Following Anthology's successful comeback, which ushered in Yellow Submarine's official DVD release premiere in Liverpool, the Mayor of Liverpool, Joseph Devaney, proclaimed Bank Holiday Monday 30 August 1999 as "Yellow Submarine Day". This celebration of over 300,000 people attracted international attention (Reiter, 2008). Prior to Anthology's broadcast, the British press covered the series with the 'biggest bidding war in TV history' (Badman, 2009). Of course, the financial rewards were the biggest aim of the project, and apart from the benefits that the Beatles gained from it, the project was able to generate millions of dollars in revenue through merchandise products alone (Reiter, 2008). Even though Beatles Anthology was meant to be a money maker, it was surprisingly honest in its portrayal of some of the less enjoyable chapters, which added to the credibility of the documentary and was in keeping with the behaviour of the Beatles in the 60s (Reiter, 2008). These stories provide those who listen to them with a range of mediums that could be used for research, reminiscence, exploration, and remembrance. Steven D. Stark (2005) points out that the Beatles have been recognised as a historical phenomenon in their own time, but even then, some of the distortions of history are due to the band's immense popularity.

The Beatles succeeded in creating a particular modern phenomenon, a new cultural force, the Beatles routinised and institutionalised pop bands through emotional interaction with their audiences (Marshall, 2000). Relationships and models between pop music bands and fans are being consistent. If we look today, fans need to show their support and scream hysterically during concerts, such as the Korean idol group BTS's concert. Once the Beatles join in the American market, the Beatles and the Rolling Stones began to take over stadiums, and this gradual

scale of outdoor music events has become a shared experience for a generation (Glancy, 2019). Concerts at football stadiums and baseball fields became a time for fans to experience irrationality and hysteria (Marshall, 2000).

The Beatles portrayed themselves as a commodity by portraying themselves as the boys next door. Besides this, the Beatles provided directions for other bands to develop after they broke up. The Beatles as a group represented a series of cultural memories, but these also became pressures, and after the breakup they had to face re-inventing the image that belonged to them. Thus Lennon became an experimental artist, Harrison an oriental influenced guitarist and Starr an actor (Marshall, 2000). After this, reinvention became the new mode of renewal in pop music, such as teenage idols who used to be part of a pop group starting to act or becoming solo singers.

In addition to their musical legacy, their portrayal in video and the successive productions that appeared many years afterwards served as a means of effective public exposure for the group. Crowds of different generations could become familiar with the Beatles in a short period of time through the mode of video, and communication could be more diverse. The films Backbeat (1994) and Nowhere Boy (2009) show the early life and formation of the Beatles, and the documentary The Beatles: Eight Days a Week shows their life on tour. In Anthology, allowed a large number of young people to reacquaint themselves with the Beatles through video, listen to the Beatles, learn about the Beatles, worship the Beatles, and finally become a new generation of Beatlemania. Meanwhile, the film also boosted the sales of other complementary products, such as Yellow Submarine, a toy from the film series, and the city's tour programme Magical Mystery Tour. The collaboration between the Beatles monthly magazine and Beatles Corgi toys became a personalised memory (Geraghty, 2014). McCartney's debut documentary If These Walls Could Sing aired in 2022, Ringo Starr has said, they were merely street performers when they recorded their first album at Abbey Road (Figure 41). Abbey Road's concert hall has witnessed many noteworthy moments, with Pink Floyd creating Dark Side of the Moon. The members of Oasis also join the

recording of this documentary, including frate male Liam Gallagher and Noel Gallagher. For them, the Beatles are their hero band, and the Beatles' music greatly influenced their epic 90s work. Peter Aspden (2023) of the Financial Times has critically stated that the film is cobbled together with visual flair in a shamelessly nostalgic tone, but is "fascinating".



Figure 41. The Beatles were walking out of Abbey Studios when they took this photo, which appeared on the cover of their last album, Abbey Road, in 1969. Resource: Album Abbey Road

As technology advances, the Anthology project's albums have been digitally remastered so that a new generation could experience The Beatles' music through the best sound quality possible. Remastered and available for digital download on the iTunes Store from 14 June 2011 (Anthology 3, 2008, March 14).

A Timeless Phenomenon: The Beatles' Enduring Influence in Modern Times (2010s - Present)

The World Wide Web is a major engine of social and cultural transformation, a transformative moment in history, not of some huge policy change, but rather a change in the perceptions and habits of society at large. It made everything findable, everything existent, and all ideas have the potential to be implemented. And a lot of things are naturally becoming repositories of a large number of usable cultural artefacts. The online environment and data mining provide a space for

creating and maintaining illusions of connection to the past, and Beatles fans are able to remain fans even as their idols age (Womack and Kapurch, 2016). The Beatles are getting bigger in 21 Century. Technology has altered the way music interacts and synchronises with other forms of media and advertising, in addition to changing production models in the music industry (Inglis, 2016). Building on the popularity and advancement of AI, some have begun to attempt to incorporate AI into musical works. Paul McCartney stated in 2023 that he utilised AI to help create the Beatles' final record, with the AI separating John's voice from the piano and then creating a demo version that Yoko Ono provided about for Paul. The bespoke Al demixing technology used here was developed by director Peter Jackson, and was also used in the eight-hour documentary Get Back, which shows the making of the Beatles' 1970 album Let It Be, as well as a 42-minute rooftop concert (as shown in Figure 45). The work has been described as a documentary about a documentary (Hagan, 2021). Jackson used a computer algorithm to feed the film with grainy, desaturated film, giving the video bright, vibrant colours and clear images that look like they were shot yesterday, not 1969 (Perlow, 2021). In this machine learning system, the computer could learn what John and Paul sounded like, separate these mono tracks, and remix them very cleanly (Perlow, 2021). The expanding rock and roll industry of the early 21st century, with globalisation, technological updates and ubiquitous networks, surpasses billions dollars in annual sales each year (Kotarba, 2002). For instance, in 2009, the video game The Beatles: Rock Band was released and the game appeared as if the band had been reborn as virtual performers after decades of absence. This game was reintroduced to the modern world as a form of simulation that could be interacted with as co-performers (Auslander and Inglis, 2016).



Figure 42. The eight-hour Documentary The Beatles: Get Back documentary, 2021.

Resource: The Beatles: Get Back Promotional release poster

The Beatles' legacy of innovation demonstrates that nostalgia has the power not only to preserve but also to revolutionise. Their music and image is a mirror of social change that continues to shape and define the contours of British culture (Heilbronner, 2008).

3.5 Liverpool's Cultural Repositioning and the Strategic Deployment of the Beatles

3.5.1 From Merseybeat to Britpop: National Framing and Cultural Policy

Liverpool is a city of musical heritage, and the evolution of Liverpool's music scene from 'Merseybeat' to 'Britpop' has been a complex and multifaceted process. Music for Liverpool has been the underpinning of hard times, the product of the city's fabric, and the driving force behind its development (Lashua, 2011). Merseybeat is more than ever a symbol of Liverpool's socio-economic renaissance, and has seen it transformed from a struggling postwar harbour to a cultural hotspot. Architecturally, Liverpool is famous for its Three Graces, the Liver Building, the Cunard Building and the Port of Liverpool Building. There are also "Three Graces" in music, which are the Cavern Club, Eric's Club, and Cream (Lashua, Cohen and Schofield, 2009, p. 126). Fuelled by venues such as The Cavern Club, the city had a vibrant music scene, with around 350 active bands in Liverpool at its peak. In the 60s, in addition to the best known Beatles, there were Gerry and the Pacemakers, The Searchers and The Swinging Blue Jeans. I knew You'll Never Walk Alone from Liverpool football, a song with a strong energy of solidarity and hope. But it is the singer I know from a quip that Gerry Marsden, as a member of Gerry and the Pacemakers, once joked about the Mersey sound: it's like the weather in Liverpool, unpredictable, a bit rough, but when it's good, it's excellent! (Interview of The Independent, 1993). Although by 1967, the Merseybeat was in decline due to changing musical tastes, the period's legacy remained and Liverpool continued to maintain its reputation as a musical powerhouse.

For the baby boomer generation, rock music was neither confined to nor exclusively the province of adolescence, it was a culture that accompanied their maturation (Kotarba, 2002). At this time, pop music became a powerful symbol of national or regional identity and heritage (Brandellero et al., 2014, cited in Kinsella and Peters, 2022, p. 42). The period from the 60s to the 1990s marked a distinctive

epoch in the evolution of music, during which the lyrics of pop songs underwent transformation and politically charged music developed (Spivack et al., 2019). Rock music influenced the roles and identities of adults in various ways, such as citizens engaging with the political and moral issues surrounding rock, rock enthusiasts, parents of rock fans, and individuals who drew upon rock music as a source of joy and sorrow (Kotarba, 2002). Liverpool's music scene experienced two waves, centred around the Cavern Club in the 60s and Eric's bar in the 70s, both of which influenced the music industry in the 1980s (Cohen, 1992). Pubs played a vital role in the cultural makeup of every Liverpool community, with each rock venue having its own unique story (Bennett, 1997). The decline of Merseybeat began with a shift in musical preferences towards emerging blues rock and psychedelic scenes, at a time when Liverpool also faced new challenges. From industrial decline to the pursuit of modernisation, the broader socio-economic transformations triggered were not smooth. In the 1980s, against a generally pessimistic environment, Liverpool suffered from acute economic difficulties, with high unemployment rates and many people living on welfare. Nevertheless, this did not impede the development of music. The 1980s saw the emergence of 'The Liverpool Dole Queue Culture', with many young people turning to music as a form of escapism and expression. This era gave rise to new music genres and influential bands, Echo and the Bunnymen, The Teardrop Explodes, New Order, and other groups introduced independent and alternative rock in the 1980s, and the precursors to post-punk, new wave, and Madchester, all paving the way for Britpop in the 1990s.

When I examine the shift from Merseybeat to Britpop from the perspective of official and government policy, I find that there has been a significant shift in the attitudes of the British government and local authorities towards popular music and its cultural impact. During the Merseybeat era, the government's attitude towards popular music was largely indifferent, even dismissive. There was a lack of official recognition and support for the thriving music scene in Liverpool and beyond, ignoring the cultural and economic potential of the music scene. The prevailing attitude was that popular music was an ephemeral, youth-oriented fad,

unworthy of cultural severe or economic consideration. And young people were rebellious and at odds with traditional, more revered forms of culture. As the Beatles and other Merseybeat bands began to achieve unprecedented global success, their influence could no longer be ignored. But despite this, Liverpool remains reluctant to apply it (Cohen, 2017). This was because the counterculture represented by the Beatles remained rebellious and unconscionable in the minds of the older generation, just as parents viewed the Beatlemania girls as sick. Not to mention, in the later years of the Beatles, the various dangerous statements and drug-addicted behaviour of the members (Collins, 2019).

At the end of the 1980s, the local government in Liverpool incorporated the arts and cultural industries as a part of its economic restructuring plan, a stance that attracted a substantial number of Beatles fans and revived interest from private enterprises in the city (Cohen, 2017). This period marked a change from previous negative sentiments to a generally optimistic attitude towards pop music. Many were willing to harness pop music as a tool for urban economic revitalisation, and more importantly, the financial revenue generated from pop music production satisfied the local government. Thus, Scott Lash and John Urry (1994, p. 123) characterised music as a post-Fordist industry, more flexible and innovative economic model. Numerous cities have utilised music as a public utility within the framework of urban heritage, with John Connell and Chris Gibson (2003, p. 9) describing music as one of the most fluid forms of culture. Beyond Liverpool, cities like Hamburg in Germany also embraced the Beatles as part of their urban heritage due to Beatles' early performance experience. In the 1990s, as industries began to decline and youth unemployment rates soared, there was a growing anxiety among the youth regarding national identity and personal destiny (Bennett, 2000). There was a noticeable shift in the government's and officials' attitudes towards pop music. Prime Minister Tony Blair recognised the music industry's potential as a tool for economic growth and cultural export. The government was willing to acknowledge and capitalise on the global appeal of British music. Additionally, the pessimistic economic outlook and changes in production models forced industrial cities like Manchester and Liverpool to find ways to utilise their musical heritage

for urban revival. With its rich musical heritage, Liverpool began to use the Merseybeat for broader cultural activities and to promote Beatles tourism, marking a significant transformation for the city (Connell, 2009).

The evolution of the policy also reflects more comprehensive changes in society's attitudes towards popular culture and young people. Pop music was seen as rebellious and counter-cultural in the past. By the mid-1990s, the cultural phenomenon of Britpop, influenced by the British pop and rock bands of the 1960s and 1970s, had reached its peak and had become an integral part of the national identity and a symbol of modern Britain. Phil Cohen (1972) noted that Britpop assisted in the 'miraculous restoration' of the British national identity. It has also been argued that Blur defined a new kind of Britishness, which was not based on a nostalgic attitude to Britain, but a Britain that you could recognise as the one you lived in (Jones, 1994). Naturally, this change was not without its critics, who argued that the commercialisation and institutionalisation of popular music could lead to a loss of its original spirit and authenticity. In the mid-1990s tourism entrepreneurs associated with the Beatles felt the need to demonstrate that investment in popular music was valuable as a tourist attraction, and worked to raise the status of Beatles culture as a highbrow destination (Cohen, 2017). At the same time the significance of the Beatles' approach to city promotion was recognised by the Mersey Partnership organisation (an economic development and investment agency based in the Liverpool City Region), and city planners recognised the impact of local bands in terms of establishing a new cultural resonance for the city (Leonard, 2013).

The development of Beatles tourism has been a response to social and economic transformations, with the systematisation of this tourism further influenced by globalisation (Cohen, 2017). Globalisation appears to have reemphasised local specificity, encouraging a fresh pursuit of local traits and the emergence of new forms of expression (Kierans and Haeney, 2010). Policies for urban redevelopment and cultural promotion have sustained Liverpool's influence in the music sphere. National Museums Liverpool (NML) organised a large-scale exhibition of

Liverpool's popular music heritage called The Beat Goes On from 2008 to 2009 (Figure 43).

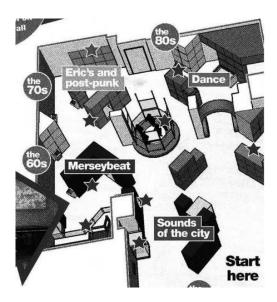


Figure 43. layout of The Beat Goes On exhibition at National Museums Liverpool. Courtesy of National Museums Liverpool (Lashua, Cohen and Schofield, 2009)

The exhibition showcased Cavern and Mersey Beat in the 60s, Eric's and post-punk in the 1970s, and Cream and 'house' music in the 1990s (Lashua, Cohen and Schofield, 2009). The European Capital of Culture event in 2008, among others, recognised Liverpool's artistic contributions, further solidifying its status as a crucible of musical innovation. Discussing the economic and cultural significance of the Beatles to the city, Liverpool's Mayor Joanne Anderson noted, "The Beatles helped to put Liverpool on the map in the 60s. Half a century later, their legacy still draws millions of visitors, adding millions of pounds to Liverpool's economy annually" (BBC News, 2021, July). This reflected in the fiscal budget of 2021, with the central government willing to invest substantial funds in new venue construction, despite debates over the necessity of this investment (BBC News, 2021, October). In fact, this nostalgia is an unhesitating choice for Beatles fans, a choice that affirms the significance of nostalgic Beatles for the city of Liverpool. From the revolutionary atmosphere of the early Merseybeat and Swinging Sixties to the continuous development of the Beatles' legacy in Liverpool, this demonstrates the fusion of personal nostalgia and collective nostalgia (Cohen, 2017).

3.5.2 Symbolic Capital and Urban Recovery

Liverpool enjoys global acclaim, significantly attributed to the musical legacy of The Beatles and the widespread admiration for Liverpool Football Club. The city's waterfront and architecture have long been its defining features (Kierans and Haeney, 2010). In 2004, the city was bestowed the UNESCO World Heritage Site for its historical significance and architectural landmarks. However, in July 2021, Liverpool's World Heritage status was rescinded by the United Nations Committee due to development projects, including the Everton FC Stadium, that threatened the integrity of the city's historical and cultural assets (BBC News, 2021). Liverpool is the first British city to lose this honor and the symbol of the consequences of British deindustrialization (Boland et al., 2024). The city's trajectory has been marred by extensive unemployment, urban decline, and associated socioeconomic challenges (Sykes et al., 2013). From the 18th century, African sailors and workers were often drawn to Liverpool due to its bustling economy and opportunities within the maritime industry. Post-World War I saw an influx of volunteers from the West Indies (Cohen, 2017). Like other British coastal cities, Liverpool experienced shifts due to the new international division of labour, global trade dynamics, and the impacts of both World Wars, transitioning from a prosperous hub to a city marked by relative socio-economic deprivation (Kierans and Haeney, 2010). The 60s saw multinationals setting up operations in Liverpool, lured by the availability of cheap labour. Their price and efficiency advantages caused large numbers of small businesses to collapse (Meegan, 2003). Consequently, Liverpool faced an escalation in unemployment earlier than other cities and experienced exacerbated economic downturns (Meegan, 2003). From the end of World War II until the 1980s, industrial production no longer expanded in conventional manners. Periods of modernisation resulting in long-term prosperity replacing the austerity period, and then long-term prosperity being replaced by white goods consumer culture. As new avenues for capital accumulation emerged, this consumer culture began to wane (Brocken, 2015). Such conditions offer a global microcosm of pivotal economic transformations in developed capitalist nations (Brocken, 2015).

British exports were in high demand in the postwar period and the port of Liverpool played an essential role in facilitating this aspect of trade (Leonard, 2013). Liverpool's economy improved slightly due to the reemergence of world trade and port activities (Cohen, 2017). After World War II, Royal Albert Dock became the most extensive single collection of Grade I listed buildings (BBC News, 2021). The revival of trade in the postwar period allowed the city council to declare Liverpool as the second largest port in Britain in 1965, handling 25% of the national trade value (Couch, 2017). The presence of the port had a significant impact on the culture and politics of the city, with the working-class in particular creating a popular culture prevalent in homes, streets, pubs, clubs, concert halls and football stadiums (Russell, 2004). In the 1950s, due to immigration, cultural exchange and America influence, working-class children were exposed to folk, country and western, rock 'n' roll, calypso, American show tunes, sectarian religious street songs and the terrace chants of Anfield and Goodison Park (Gildart, 2013). Pubs and clubs were used by sailors, crew members and immigrants to escape from the hardships, and were also places where a great deal of exotic music could be accessed. In Liverpool, the consumption of pop music was a temporary escape from classism (Gildart, 2013).



Figure 44. Christopher Columbus, Sefton Park Palm House, Liverpool. Resource: Wikimedia Commons

The statue of Christopher Columbus in Sefton Park bears the inscription, The Discoverer of the US was the Maker of Liverpool. The city's special relationship with the United States provides difference culture background to Liverpool's music and constructs an indispensable context for the emergence of the Beatles (Millard, 2012). Bill Harry (2009), a historian of the Beatles' contemporaries, calculated that there were roughly 500 different bands in the Merseyside area between 1958 and 1964 (p. 9). Baby boomers in Liverpool are relatively wealthier than their parents' generation (Todd and Young, 2012). As the working youth became progressively more affluent, they did not want to be stuck in a small place, their enthusiasm for new things gradually intensified, and they wanted to be able to take risks. For the Liverpool youth, the café was where they had access to the latest American and Caribbean sounds (Gildart, 2013). The trade links between the two continents generated admiration, dreams and desires for all things American and young people could see another way of life across the sea (Millard, 2012). As Philip Norman (2011, p. 66) describes, a whole day could be spent in a cup of iced coffee, watching the flow of Chinese, West Indians, and East Indians going to and across the sea. The artists, musicians, pimps, beggars, and vagabonds would all use the Jacaranda Café café as their headquarters (Williams, 1976, cited in Norman, 2011, p. 89). Liverpool's culture is made up of various religious, ethnic and racial identities, and Dave Russell (2000) argued that Liverpool's presence allowed the Beatles to succeed in being the first pop group to make local identity and cultural context part of their success (p. 30).

Upon the Beatles' disbandment in 1970, Liverpool confronted a looming economic shadow, with its potential as a creative business hub seeming elusive (Wilson and Womersley, 1976). The city's developmental trajectory from the 1970s was anchored in entrenched structural issues, largely unaddressed by municipal authorities (Kierans and Haeney, 2010). Few cities grappled as intensely as Liverpool with widespread unemployment arising from dockyards, ports, factories, and railways, leading to economic, cultural, and social decline throughout the municipality (Homan, 2006). The industrial pulse, once resonating from its docks, faded, and as the cultural heartbeat represented by The Beatles dissipated,

symbolic national support for investment and redevelopment waned, instigating further Merseyside fragmentation (Homan, 2006). The intertwined decline of both the Beatles and Liverpool seemed to manifest a directionless future. Media narratives often intertwined Liverpool's glory and decline with the Beatles, and Beatles tourism epitomised the city's nostalgic and despairing clutch on its past (Cohen, 2017). Liverpool emerged as a city of contradictions, where narratives of poverty and decay juxtaposed tales of former glory and affluence, where former triumphs seemed veiled by unemployment, adversity, and setbacks (Cohen, 1992).

Liverpool was characterised by socio-economic divisions as a port city, evoking a detachment from the broader British context. While shipping magnates, businessmen and traders accumulated wealth, the majority of the city's workingclass faced harsh economic conditions. This class gap fostered a sense of resilience and solidarity among the working-class, who developed a defiant identity, often independent of other areas of Britain. This unique position allowed it to uphold the spirited, vivacious, and resilient nature intrinsic to maritime cultures (Lane, 1986). Despite economic stagnation, Liverpool's indomitable spirit propelled it into the 1990s. A balance emerged, with signs of ameliorating the city's ill repute for financial mismanagement and industry income, and employment rates witnessed a gradual upturn (Jones and Wilks-Heeg, 2004). However, even by the mid-1990s, despite infrastructural advancements, Liverpool remained a city grappling with concentrated socio-economic impoverishment (Jones and Wilks-Heeg, 2004). The city's musical fervour provided an avenue for catharsis, escapism, boundless creative envisioning, and the fostering of camaraderie (Cohen, 1992). At the same time, the Beatles' music can evoke memories of local communities and local landscapes, which may be related to community consciousness in working-class areas following urban regeneration or deindustrialisation (Van der Hoeven, 2018, p. 215).

In my mind, due to the special environment of Liverpool that gives the Beatles' music its constant freshness. The Beatles could only have come from Liverpool, where all cultures come together, and where the locals knew to call themselves

scousers (a scouser is a stew with many things in it (Millard, 2012). I think Liverpudlian refers to the characteristics that Liverpool's culture holds: the distinctive sense of humour, the resilience, the regional pride of the people and the multi-regional mix of cultures. The diversity of the content of the Beatles' songs was a source of their success, and this diversity connects working-class origins and their Britishness (Heilbronner, 2008). Liverpool is an integral part of the Beatles' story, with many of the band's releases having Liverpool references, such as the songs "Penny Lane" and "Strawberry Fields Forever", which were released in 1967. However, by this time they had already travelled to London (Leonard, 2013). On the album Revolver, the Beatles redefining pop music and introducing Indian music, electronic music, chamber music and brass band music; elements of pop culture from Liverpool (Nuttall, Field and Sinclair, 2018). As the Beatles matured, their lyrics became increasingly Liverpudlian, with classical music, music hall ballads, Indian music, electronic music and surrealist poetry gradually appearing in songs such as Yellow Submarine (Nuttall, 1968). Yoko Ono wrote on the sleeve of John Lennon's album Menlove Avenue, that she hears in the songs of the boys who grew up in Liverpool listening to Greensleeves, BBC radio and recording artist Tessie O'Shea (Menlove Ave, 2018). The Beatles members' relationship with the city has remained strong and personal, with Sir Paul founding the Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts. The airport and Liverpool John Moores University School of Art were renamed Liverpool John Lennon Airport and John Lennon School of Art and Design, respectively (Yates, Evans and Jones, 2016). The honour that the Beatles brought to this country and their achievements in business gave Liverpool a deep sense of pride, symbolising Liverpool's uniqueness, creativity and being cosmopolitan (Cohen, 2017).



Figure 45. John Lennon's album Menlove Avenue. Resource: Menlove Avenue Cover

This chapter explores the role of The Beatles in Liverpool's cultural history, drawing on a wealth of historical and contemporary materials. By examining youth subcultures, local music movements, urban decline and regeneration, and cultural policies, it reveals how the Beatles served both as a local symbol and a strategic resource, shaping the city's identity. This material lays the groundwork for the next chapter, demonstrating that their legacy is not confined to the past but continues to influence the city's cultural positioning and development in meaningful ways.

Chapter 4: Case Study: Findings

Building on the background and empirical foundation established in Chapter 3, this chapter will conduct a thematic structural analysis of the findings from the Beatles in the Liverpool case study. These themes reflect how the Beatles have been integrated into everyday memory practices, economic strategies, and emotional geography. The aim is to demonstrate how the Beatles' cultural heritage is intertwined with memory, emotion, and meanings, and how it functions in contemporary urban life. The following sections are organised thematically to highlight key patterns: the role of cultural institutions in shaping memory, the emotional appeal of fan pilgrimages, the city's tourism narratives, intergenerational continuity, the gender dimensions of nostalgia, and the therapeutic uses of memory in coping with trauma.

4.1 Cultural Memory and Institutional Preservation

The cultural legacy of the Beatles functions not merely as an object of nostalgic longing but as a dynamic site of memory preservation, structured by affective investment, institutional mediation, and collective trauma. Drawing upon Greil Marcus's (1999) notion of cultural death in his discussion of Elvis Presley, the disbandment of the Beatles in 1970 may be interpreted as a symbolic death, while the assassination of John Lennon in 1980 represents a moment of literal finality. As Mills (2019) notes, such rupture initiated a deepened temporal detachment. In his description, when the Beatles disbanded, the fans were genuinely living in the Beatles' output, a dialogue between the ghosts and the fans consisting of songs, artwork, books, films, and dreams (Mills, 2019). American author Steven D. Stark (2005) states that "To be sure, there's a process with any historical figure by which those associated with the figure color their memories through the lens of subsequent events. With the Beatles, however, this process was exponential. The group reached a level of celebrity and adoration never seen before or since in modern times (p. 7)". The Beatles' afterlife thus unfolds within a structure of delayed mourning and nostalgic reactivation.

This phenomenon may be conceptualised through Freud's theory of deferred action (Nachträglichkeit), where a traumatic event resurfaces at a later time, often more intensely, due to its initial repression in the unconscious (Freud, 1961). In his topography of the mind, the conscious and the unconscious are split, and when the traumatic event is not processed, it is repressed in the unconscious. The result of this belated return of repressed memories is a reliving of the past, the 'compulsion to repeat' (Freud, 1961, p. 12). The loss experienced by fans—particularly following Lennon's death—can be seen as a form of cultural trauma that is progressively reinscribed through rituals of repetition, memorialisation, and re-enactment. Tribute bands, fan conventions, and pilgrimage practices serve as "acting out" of the unresolved loss, while also reconfiguring affective ties into collective cultural participation. As Mills (2019) argues, this repetition is not merely

melancholic but generative, allowing for affective investment to be channelled into living cultural memory.

Crucially, this process of memorialisation has not remained confined to informal or vernacular cultural practices. In recent decades, the heritage sector has increasingly institutionalised popular music as part of Britain's national memory infrastructure. One effect of globalisation is that different countries or cities have begun to focus on providing specific services, with Britain focusing on history and heritage (Urry and Larsen 2013, p. 55, cited in Atkinson, 2015, p. 130). Traditionally excluded from heritage discourses, popular music has been reclassified as a legitimate domain of cultural history, with museums, archives, and national trusts incorporating it into their curatorial practices (Bennett, 2015; Baker, 2017). These institutions are also increasingly taking on the financial and administrative responsibility of collecting popular culture knowledge (Bennett, 2022, p. 38). Such institutionalisation is evident in the British Museum's display of original Beatles lyrics, handwritten on napkins, and in the symbolic restoration of domestic spaces central to the band's early life. As Assmann (2011) wrote: "the archive is not just a place in which documents from the past are preserved; it is also a place where the past is constructed and produced (quoted in Bennett, 2022, p. 39)."

In 1983, the National Heritage Act was announced, pointing out that as heritage industries such as museums became increasingly privatised, cultural observers noticed the importance of heritage to tourism (Hewison, 1987; Marwick, 2003, p. 322–323; Samuel, 1996, cited in Atkinson, 2015, p. 138). Historian François Hartog (2005, p. 12) considers heritage to be a new historical institution, whereby, as memory is increasingly asserted or demanded, everything can be regarded as heritage or has the potential to become heritage (cited in Roberts, 2014, p. 269). The National Trust's acquisition of Paul McCartney's childhood home at 20 Forthlin Road (purchased in 1995), and John Lennon's residence at Mendips on Menlove Avenue (donated in 2002 by Yoko Ono), mark a significant shift in the heritage industry's embrace of popular culture. These restorations, meticulously reconstituted to reflect their 1950s domestic conditions, not only offer spatial

authenticity but also participate in constructing a tangible narrative of origin. As writer Robert Brocken (2015) details, these sites function as affective archives, imbued with symbolic value and curated memory, framing the Beatles not simply as entertainers but as emblematic figures of cultural genesis.

This convergence of fandom, memory, and institutional preservation illustrates the broader cultural logic of nostalgia at work: a movement from personal mourning to collective heritage. The transition of Beatles-related artefacts and locations into official historical sites reflects a wider epistemological transformation in how societies define and conserve cultural value. As Hewison (1987) suggested in his early critique of Britain's heritage industry, such musicalisation of national culture attempts to stabilise identity by staging an imagined past as a usable present. In the case of the Beatles, however, this process appears less as conservative ossification and more as an affective infrastructure that enables ongoing imaginative participation.

In this regard, the preservation of Beatles memory is not a passive archival endeavour but an active mode of cultural reproduction. It demonstrates how institutions mediate between trauma and continuity, loss and legacy. The Beatles become not only subjects of historical curiosity but also vehicles through which contemporary cultural identity, tourism economies, and emotional communities are continually negotiated and reconfigured.

4.2 Emotional Experience and Fan Fandom Pilgrimage

The passing of John Lennon made it impossible for the Beatles ever to get back together to perform again, and this tragedy a love for the Beatles that was deeper than ever before. The breakup left an "emotional vacuum" for many admirers and provided a physical repository for their fans' unreleased emotions (Gregory, 2012; quoted in Heyman, 2020, p. 255). In this space, fans found new outlets for affective attachment, including the pursuit of bootleg recordings, remastered interviews, and rehearsal tapes, each item functioning as a fragment of presence in the absence of the whole. Fans seeking to fulfil their desire to hear every recording prompted the market for various types of disc formats, including live performances, studio highlights, rehearsal recordings, and even interviews. Some of the better-known Beatles bootleg records include Get Back (the recordings made before the official release of Let It Be) and the Black Album (a compilation of the Beatles' solo tracks, which was imagined to be what the Abbey Road album would have looked like after its release). Some fans buy Beatles-related items, and other fans try to write sex novels to fulfil their mental desire, but in Richard Mills' (2019) words, tribute bands are the ultimate fans. Tribute bands are trying to make up for the trauma caused by the Beatles' separation. They did their best to be the Beatles, mimicking their songs, using their accents, wearing the same clothes as them and mimicking their personalities, dedicating their lives and careers to the Beatles (Mills, 2019). These tribute bands become affective vessels for fans, mitigating the trauma of separation through live reperformance. In this way, they perform what Boym (2001) calls restorative nostalgia, a yearning that seeks to rebuild the lost home rather than simply reflect upon it.

For fans, the process of performing in a tribute band represents that disbanded bands are reunited, deceased rock stars are resurrected and classic live performances can be recreated (Homan, 2006). Tribute bands have been examined within the field of sociology for their postmodern characteristics, aiming to produce a perfect simulacrum, in alignment with the 'postmodern turn' as described by social theorists (Best and Kellner, 1997). Tribute performances

enable an uncanny simulation of the original, resonating with Jean Baudrillard's (1994) concept of simulacra: representations that substitute the real, yet generate authentic emotional experience for their audience. This blending of imitation and affect is not superficial. It is an ideology that embraces diversity, rejects totality, and encourages us to reexamine the way we understand knowledge, identity, and culture. On the other hand, these bands adapt the works of now-defunct groups primarily to satiate the nostalgic desires of fans, enabling them to relive specific moments from their youth (Homan, 2006). Tribute bands have now become an integral part of the global popular music performance landscape, with some of the more established acts attracting large audiences each time they perform (Bennett, 2006). Harry Shapiro (1988) argues that fans set up the performers as representatives of their constructed communities, and that the musicians are like a blank slate filled with the fans' own desires, hopes, frustrations, and unfulfilled pleasures. These Beatles tribute bands offer fans a chance to relive their youth, to be a teenager again, bringing wave after wave of nostalgia (Homan, 2006).

Fans have been able to satiate their yearning for Beatles music through individual ex-Beatles concerts. However, tribute bands began to emerge in pursuit of a perfect experience and to satisfy their nostalgia and utopian recollections of youth (Heyman, 2021, p. 254). The Beatles can be said to be the most imitated band in the history of pop music (Oakes, 2006, cited in Heyman, 2021, p. 79). Tribute bands are bands that pretend to be bands, they replicate the look, sound and feel of the original band as closely as possible. These tribute acts not only cover songs but also strive to capture the 'authentic' sound and meticulously emulate the visual imagery of the band, aiming for a harmonious performance (Homan, 2006). They explore various channels to achieve this 'authenticity,' seeking vintage guitars, amplifiers, and special effects (vocal effects and Leslie Speaker effects), some even custom-made. Some members aim to mimic specific actions, expressions, and styles of individual Beatles, aiming for perfection. In this condition, the title of the first Beatles tribute band usually belongs to Rain (Figure 46), which was formed in the mid-1970s as the Reign band, with a name that referenced the 1966 Beatles single Rain. The members of Rain endeavour to faithfully reproduce the Beatles'

sound. They have been performing the Beatles' music for decades with great attention to detail, both in terms of musical fidelity and visual presentation. We now still have the ability to purchase tickets to see them perform at the official website. The Bootleg Beatles were one of the earliest and most respected Beatles tribute band, and they are still touring around the world (Figure 47). Their name humorously acknowledges their role as an unofficial or tribute version of the Beatles. The band's members come from the London West End musical Beatlemania. The Bootleg Beatles were a direct product of Beatlemania, touring the world with elaborate costumes, hairstyles, accents, and stage shows (Heyman, 2020). They performed many Beatles tracks, including songs from *Revolver* that the Beatles themselves had never performed live (Homan, 2006). The Bootleg Beatles set out to resurrect a nostalgic but fictionalised past in an authentic way.



Figure 46. Rain Performance. Resource: RAIN - A tribute to the Beatles Website

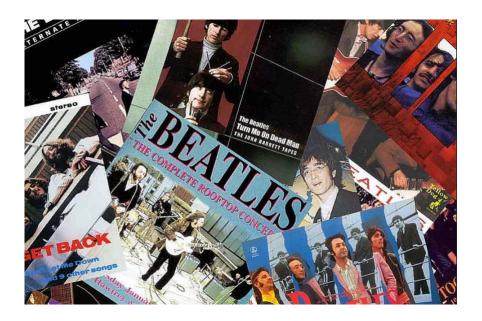


Figure 47. Beatles Bootlegs Albums (Gallucci, 2013)

These tribute bands have a large audience, but they rarely receive critical recognition, partly due to their inability to meet the standards of classic works, especially in terms of originality and authenticity (Gregory, 2010, cited in Heyman, 2021, p. 91). Tribute acts generally replicate core repertoires and engage in visual imitation, yet they also offer new interpretations based on genre, gender, location, race, and time, among other ideological boundaries (Heyman, 2020). The cultural work of tribute bands goes beyond restoration, they also facilitate cultural transmission. Through their performances, fans from younger generations are introduced to the Beatles, experiencing not only the music but the ethos of a bygone era. Engelskircher (2021) highlights how tribute acts such as The Recalls reinterpret the Beatles with new arrangements and experimental fusions, transforming nostalgia into a transcultural and intergenerational practice. These reinterpretations are not mere reproductions but creative reimaginings that sustain emotional continuity while accommodating cultural evolution.

German tribute band The Recalls represent the ongoing enthusiasm for the Beatles as a transcultural phenomenon. Beyond mere tribute, they transform the Beatles' legacy into something uniquely their own (Engelskircher, 2021), such as reinterpreting songs with unique arrangements, modern instrumentation, or experimental genre fusions. One advantage of such tribute bands is that they allow

audiences unfamiliar with the Beatles to appreciate the intrinsic beauty of the music (Engelskircher, 2021).

The Monkees were a unique presence. The Monkees were not a tribute band, they were initially created as a band for the TV show *The Monkees* which aired from 1966 to 1968. They were formed as a tribute to the film *A Hard Day's Night*, but later became a real band, touring and producing songs outside of the TV show, such as "Last Train to Clarksville", "I'm a Believer". They were an original band influenced by the Beatles invasion.



Figure 48. The Monkees. Resource: NBCU Photo Bank/NBCUniversal via Getty Images



Figure 49. Monkees Promotion Photo. Resource: TV Insider

Other forms of homage include parody bands like The Rutles, who engage in ironic nostalgia, and satire and affection coexist (Hutcheon, 1985). For example, they mockingly depicted the lives and careers of the Beatles in their mockumentary *All You Need Is Cash*. They use comedy and humour to comment on the real band's history, music and cultural influences. These acts, though humorous, underline the enduring symbolic power of the Beatles in contemporary media. Similarly, Beatallica blends Metallica and Beatles styles, introducing yet another layer of hybrid nostalgia that expands the Beatles' reach into new genres and identities.

Compared to tribute bands, parody bands usually exaggerate certain aspects and may use exaggerated hand gestures when performing. Elements from different sources are combined for comedic effect. Tribute bands, on the other hand, exist to honour and imitate the original band, faithfully recreating the original band's performance experience and satisfying fans who did not have the opportunity to see the original band perform live in a re-creation of a Beatles concert. Despite their stylistic diversity, all such performances channel nostalgia as a reconstructive affect, supporting fans in both revisiting and renegotiating their emotional histories.

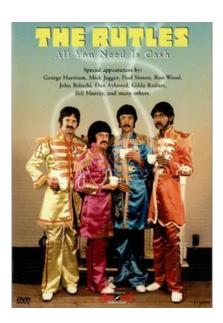


Figure 50. The Rutles. All You Need Is Cash DVD Cover. Resource: Amazon

The legacy of the Beatles also reverberates through Britpop's revivalist aesthetic. More groups began to emulate the Beatles; most notably, Oasis actively borrowed sonic motifs and visual iconography. For example, the chorus of *Don't Look Back in Anger* is reminiscent of *Imagine*, echoing its piano chord progression and melody. Through Oasis' influence, new generation of young people has once again attracted the interest of the Beatles (King, 2009). The double entendre Cool Britannia began to be used in 1996, reminding people once again of the Swinging London of the 1960s (Huq, 2010, p. 90, cited in Atkinson, 2015, p. 142). Music serves as a category for identity formation, enabling them to express their nationalist values and political identities (Bennett, 2000). Many Beatles songs

describe life in Britain, and music can function in various ways as a crucial tool for constructing, defining, and redefining national identity (Bennett, 2000). This "bornagain cultural nationalism" cast the Beatles not just as a musical influence but as a symbol of imagined national unity (Samuel, 1988, quoted in Bennett, 2000, p. 201). Author Raphael Samuel (1988) sees Britpop as a form of "born-again cultural nationalism" (quoted in Bennett, 2000, p. 201). Britpop harks back to the world of 60s Saturday football and Sunday roast beef in its emulation of the Beatles and other 60s bands, yet it obscures the less flattering aspects of modern British society that began in the 1970s, such as social unrest and strikes (Bennett, 2000). This has raised concerns that the Britain represented in this music may be an exclusionary, problem-free white world (Morley and Robins, 2002). Despite sometimes this symbol may obscure modern Britain's complexities (Morley and Robins, 2002). Here, nostalgia becomes both a tool of cultural memory and a means of selective historical amnesia.

In the decade since their breakup, other musical groups seemed to have consciously shunned their influence, except for tribute bands who sing candidly about the Beatles. For example, the punk movement led by the Sex Pistols and The Clash actively rejected the refined melodic style of the Beatles. But Neil Finn, lead singer of the New Zealand/Australian band Crowded House, frankly embraces the Beatles. Their music was influenced by the Beatles in terms of musical expression and songwriting, from danceable rock to dark and brooding (Marshall, 2000). After using technology to 'resurrect' Lennon, Apple Corps created new songs "Free as a Bird" and "Real Love" (from The Beatles *Anthology*). There were also fans posting YouTube videos of themselves singing for the dead, and these phenomena became even more exciting when new songs appeared, as death began to become a driving force for fans to create art, a progressive sentimentality that shifted nostalgia into challenging new artistic directions (Mills, 2019).

Now, 60 years on, the Beatles have been part of the cultural landscape in almost every place influenced by Western popular culture. Existing members also make intermittent appearances to the public, such as Paul McCartney's appearance at

the 2022 Glastonbury Festival, and he also has monthly newsletter, *What's That You're Doing?* Ringo Starr and his All Starr Band have also been in the process of touring. Many different genres artists have covered Beatles songs or entire albums in their tribute to the Beatles, such as Aretha Franklin and Fiona Apple. And many tribute concerts have been organised by various organisations in honour of the Beatles. In 2002, a concert was held at the Royal Albert Hall in honour of George Harrison, with performances by Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr, Eric Clapton and many others. Singer Bruce Springsteen wrote in his memoirs that there is no more magical word in the English language than 'Beatles', and his collaborator Steve Van Zandt praised the Beatles' cultural impact as being comparable to 'a spaceship landing in Central Park', a transformative moment in countless musical lives (Gopnik, 2021). Every year at the end of August, the Cavern Club co-hosts 'International Beatles Week' which attracts a large number of Beatles fans to listen to tribute bands.



Figure 51. International Beatleweek 2024. Resource: International Beatleweek Facebook
Oasis invited The Bootleg Beatles in 1995 and 1996 be their support act. They also
performed at the Golden Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II, and to this day they
continue to be active in a variety of music venues around the globe. Ian Inglis
estimated in 2006 that there were approximately 600 professional or semiprofessional Beatles tribute bands, which continue to grow (quoted in Heyman,

2021, p. 79). Tribute bands are not exactly repetitive, they influence each other and are constantly learning from each other and influencing other bands creatively, such as interpreting classics in new styles (Womack and O'Toole, 2021).

In sum, the phenomenon of fan fandom pilgrimage and emotional investment in tribute culture highlights how nostalgia operates as an affective force that reanimates the past not as it was, but as it is felt. This section thus identifies a dynamic rhythm of emotional engagement, shaped by media, death, ritual, and communal longing, which sustains the Beatles' cultural presence as more than music, as a lived affective experience.

4.3 Tourism Infrastructure and Public Narratives

Music and travelling have always been suitable partners, with classical and opera concerts and carnivals of traditional music attracting tourists since the 19th century (Connell and Gibson, 2005). Music is also one of the critical motivations for travelling and has created different types of musical tourists (Brocken, 2015). Cities are perfect sites for the production, promotion and dissemination of popular music, with music-related consumption and entertainment taking place and 20th century rock and pop styles often described as 'the sound of the city' and 'urban rhythms' (Gillett, 2011; Chambers, 1985). By the 1980s, cities like Birmingham and Glasgow were already promoting music-themed tourist trails linked to genres such as heavy metal, reggae, and ballroom pop, laying the groundwork for broader strategies of music-driven urban regeneration (Brocken, 2015). In the 1990s, music travel grew to become a trendy mode of travel, with people choosing music travel for some sense of quest, where they wanted to interact with characters through sound in natural spaces (Brocken, 2015). The increasing affordability of transport and the growing affluence of Western consumers led to an expansion of cultural tourism, transforming music travel into a practice of emotional and narrative seeking (Cohen, 2017). Particularly in Britain, the development of railways facilitated travel for the working-class, making it easier to visit seaside cities for holidays (Brennan, 2015; Hughes and Benn, 1998, cited in Kinsella and Peters, 2022, p. 41). With the rise of consumerism, the tourism industry has begun to focus more on meeting individual needs, shifting from emphasising past glories to offering tourists more diverse travel experiences (Wearing, Stevenson, and Young, 2010, p. 20, cited in Fremaux and Fremaux, 2013, p. 305). Ed Vaizey, who was Minister for Culture, Communications and Creative Industries, publicly stated in 2014 that millions of music tourists make a substantial economic contribution to the British economy each year, and therefore the combination of music and tourism would be a powerful driver of growth in the British economy. When international travel restrictions enforced during the covid pandemic began to be lifted at the beginning of 2022, this policy generated over £190 million of additional

value for Britain, in addition to the 31.2 million overseas visitors and £26.5 billion spent by all modes of transport in 2022 (British Tourist Authority, 2023). As a result, different cities started to promote the characteristics of the city, such as cultural heritage, scenic style, history or war relics. Every city tries to portray itself as a unique tourist destination and the city is sold like any other consumer product (Fainstein and Judd, 1999, p. 4). Liverpool installs sound in the city's routes, most places are connected to music, which makes history alive and vibrant.

Liverpool has consistently been a favorite place for tourists, celebrated for its imposing architecture, waterfront, and its renowned traditions in culture, entertainment, and music (Cohen, 2017). The city is symbolic of reimagined histories; the past is an integral component of its fabric, with 'ghosts of place' serving as conduits between its history and modernity. This historic foundation caters to contemporary desires and needs, especially satiating the fundamental yearnings of tourists. The present 'imagined' city is tangible because its history genuinely transpired. In this context, Liverpool resembles a spectral metropolis, replete with ghosts from its past. Any city element can be co-opted as a narrative vessel, serving those who seek to bolster their identity by fostering an attachment to the city (Brocken, 2015). Lashua, Spracklen, and Long (2014) pointed out that music provides tourists with important emotional narratives as cultural expressions, heritage forms, landmark symbols, and moment markers (quoted in Kinsella and Peters, 2022, p. 3). Urban mnemonic sites boost a collective sentiment characterised by emotional logic; visitors undergo memorable experiences, revelling in the exhilaration of sharing spaces once occupied by their idols and achieving a transcendence beyond individuality (Menke and Schwarzenegger, 2016, p. 97). In this expansive urban community, individuals with shared affinities can construct urban place memories by discussing mutual experiences, attire, artefacts, events, and emotive touchpoints. Subsequent visitors can then assimilate within these mnemonic collectives through shared experiences (Jodelet, 2010, p. 81). Nostalgia, through its positive manifestations, amplifies the city's allure far and wide. For many, visiting celebrity-associated sites is the avenue to access these memories, with revisiting narrative-rich locations

augmenting the depth of their interpretative experiences (Kruse, 2005). Cohen (1979) has delineated tourist modes into recreational, diversionary, experiential, experimental, and existential. Although motivations for travel vary, the overarching sentiment is the pursuit of profound experiences at specific sites, exploring life's meanings, and effecting transformations in facets of existence (Collins-Kreiner, 2010). This is also the purpose of tourism, to provide a homogenised, simplified, idealised and beautified image (Wang, 2000, p. 165, cited in Atkinson, 2015, p. 143). Within music-centric tourists, there exists a spectrum: from the casual, jovial visitor to emotional stakeholders of commercialised Beatles nostalgia (Kruse, 2005).

Yi-Fu Tuan (1974) introduced the concept of topophilia, defined as 'the affective bond between people and place' (quoted in Wise, Melis, and Jimura, 2020, p. 3). Tourists visiting Liverpool may not necessarily view Liverpool as a city, instead, the emotional bond lies between Beatles fans, the Beatles, and music (Wise, Melis, and Jimura, 2020). Liverpool is the former home of the Beatles, and fans can see aspects of what the band members were like, and when people are in Liverpool, they can relate to the "ghosts of place" in the city (Feldman-Barrett, 2021, p. 40). The Beatles share an intimate bond with their followers, rendering pilgrimages to Liverpool an essential avenue through which fans can experience a sense of proximity and, in the process, foster a deeper connection with their cherished band (Feldman-Barrett, 2021). Sociologist Michael Mayerfield Bell (1997, p. 821) eloquently encapsulates this sentiment, positing that individuals "experience objects and places as having ghosts. We do so because we experience objects and places socially; we experience them as we do people. Through ghosts, we reencounter the aura of social life in the aura of place" (quoted in Feldman-Barrett, 2021, p. 40). Tens of thousands of fans seeking guidance through pilgrimage, and the Beatles became their spiritual messiahs, no longer simply pop stars, but philosophers (Inglis, 2007). Rojek Chris (2004) argues that this magical or extraordinary power conferred through fans has inescapable parallels with religious worship.

The fans transformed their passion into activism and made connections with the wider world (Feldman-Barrett, 2021). For example, Beatles fan clubs around the world organize charity events, auctions and fundraisers, including the American Beatles fan gathering 'Fest for Beatles Fans' and the Cavern Club Foundation in Liverpool. Fans saw the Beatles as cultural idols and Liverpool as a place where they could express their personal identity (Brocken, 2015). Sara Cohen (2017) noted that for fans and fandom, the city of Liverpool was almost a sacred place, and that their visit to the city was an emotional experience that provided them with a spiritual connection to the Beatles. The Beatles' presence in Liverpool gave the city a spirituality and meaning constructed by its past inhabitants (Feldman-Barrett, 2021).

Liverpool has been defined as an ideal tourist destination and investment location in the context of local political change (Jones and Wilks-Heeg, 2004). Now Liverpool emphasises the Beatles' youthfulness, playfulness and innocence rather than counterculture, leftist political activism, or drug use (Kruse, 2005). These controversial histories are perceived to be erased, and the past begins to be meticulously retold (Fjellman, 2019). The presence of Liverpool's artists, actors, musicians, poets, playwrights and football teams ensured that the city continued to be represented in the cultural landscape throughout the twentieth century (Du Noyer, 2002). Like Tourism and Heritage Organizations, these core stakeholders have the duty to protect the Beatles' legacy and their connection to the city, as well as to protect the long-term brand value of the Beatles (Yates, Evans and Jones, 2016). After Beatles leave this city, Liverpool has continued to take their legacy seriously, keep the continued resilience and appeal that Beatles culture possesses.

Overlooked Potential in Beatles Tourism

Table 2. Detailed Timeline of Beatles-Related Tourism and Cultural Policy in Liverpool

Year	EVENT	DETAILS
1973	Demolition of the original	The original Cavern was demolished to accommodate underground
	Cavern Club	railway lines, often seen as a missed opportunity by the public sector
		for tourism.

1977	Establishment of the Liverpool	Formed with the help of Beatles members and local officials,
1000	Beatles Appreciation Society	absorbed later by Cavern City Tours.
1980	Aftermath of Lennon's murder	The area saw numerous tributes, including flowers tied to concrete
1001	Appointment of Michael	pillars, enhancing the site's emotional and historical significance.
1981	Appointment of Michael Heseltine as City Minister	Tasked with overseeing the rebuilding of Liverpool following the 1981
	Hesettine as Oity Minister	riots, shifted focus to broader-based regeneration and cultural development.
1983	Founding of Cavern City Tours	CCT established, began offering the 'Magical Mystery Tour' focusing
1000	(CCT)	on Beatles-related sites, impacting local tourism significantly.
1984	Cavern Club was reopened	The new Cavern Club was built on Mathew Street, close to the original
		site
Late 1980s	Recognition of pop music's	Hoteliers acknowledged the significant role of Beatles-related
	impact on tourism	tourism, with CCT dominating the tourism scene in Liverpool.
Early 1980s	Beatles Week Initiation	Organized by CCT, this event attracts global participation and
		celebrates Beatles music, enhancing Liverpool's tourism industry.
1980s-	Cultural and economic	Under Heseltine's leadership, various cultural projects were launched
1990s	development strategies	to regenerate Liverpool, including arts, heritage, and community projects.
1987	Liverpool City Council's	Heseltine used the global attention from Lennon's death to propel
	cultural policy change	cultural and economic development, influencing future tourism
		strategies.
1991	Launch of the "Magical Mystery	Boosts Beatles tourism by formalizing visits to key sites like Penny
	Tour" bus, offering guided tours	Lane, Strawberry Field, and the Cavern Club.
	to Beatles landmarks across	
	Liverpool.	
1992	Establishment of the Beatles	Provides an immersive Beatles experience with memorabilia, exhibits,
	Story Museum at Albert Dock.	and interactive elements, strengthening Liverpool's status as a
		Beatles tourism hub.
1993	Launch of Mathew Street	Started with tribute acts; expanded over time to attract hundreds of
	Festivals by CCT	thousands of visitors on the August Bank Holiday weekend.
		Terminated in 2012 due to security and funding issues.
1995	Beatles tour entrepreneurial spirit joined National Trust	Joined city entities like Merseytravel, altering the city's fabric.
1998	National Trust's acquisition of	The National Trust established structured, guided tours that allowed
	John's and Paul's childhood	small groups to visit the homes, creating an intimate experience for
	homes	fans.
1999	Paul McCartney performs at	Draws global media attention to Liverpool, reigniting interest in the
	the Cavern Club for the first	Cavern Club as a live music venue and cementing its status as a
	time since 1963.	historical and tourist attraction.
2000	Award of Blue Plaque to John	251 Menlove Avenue ('The Mendips') awarded a Blue Plaque by
	Lennon's Mendips	English Heritage, a first for non-classical musicians.
2003	Opening of Paul McCartney's	Paul McCartney's 20 Forth developed as a tourist attraction
	20 Forthlin Road to the public	
2015	Redevelopment projects like	Initiatives to improve Liverpool's appearance and night-time
	Cavern Walks	economy, aiming to revitalize the city and attract more visitors.

2017	50th anniversary of Sgt.	Attracted global media attention and large numbers of international
	Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club	tourists, contributing significantly to Liverpool's economy and cultural
	Band celebrated with citywide	profile.
	festivals and events.	
2022	Liverpool named UNESCO City	Reinforces Liverpool's status as a global music hub, with Beatles
	of Music (for the second time),	tourism playing a central role in cultural strategies aimed at
	further solidifying its musical	promoting Liverpool's historical and contemporary music scene.
	heritage.	
2023	The "Let It Be" 50th anniversary	Attracts a new generation of Beatles fans while engaging long-time
	events, including concerts,	fans, showcasing Liverpool's dedication to preserving and celebrating
	panel discussions, and	the Beatles' legacy with new, creative events.
	memorabilia exhibitions.	

Resource: Author's own

Beatles tourism initially emerged from informal activities amongst fans, progressively evolving into a more commercialised and professionalised industry (Cohen, 2017). Liverpool had seemingly undergone a phase of neglect towards its Beatles heritage (from the 1970s through the early 1980s), albeit this has been conclusively addressed in contemporary contexts (Leonard, 2013). Beatles fans spent almost 20 years making the Liverpool Government realise the importance of the Beatles' legacy. In 1977, with the assistance of some Beatles members and local government officials, a group of local fans established the Liverpool Beatles Appreciation Society. Pilgrims travelling to Liverpool, eager for deeper insights into their idols, sought the facilitation of such organisations, yet the Society was eventually absorbed by Cavern City Tours (Homan, 2006). Commencing in the 1970s, the narrative of the Beatles began its commercialisation, with early entrepreneurs recognising the necessity of attracting non-local audiences to enhance commercial viability (Cohen, 2007). Local businesspeople and club owners in Liverpool perceived the potential economic value embedded in the post-Beatles era, notable individuals, including the band's early manager, Allan Williams, and the former Cavern host, Bob Wooler (Homan, 2006). Beatles tourism amalgamates the interests of both public and private sectors; for private entities, establishing authority in Beatles-related endeavours represents commercial success (Kaijser, 2002). Despite the growing acknowledgment of the potential local contributions of the Beatles, public sector organisations remained sceptical about promoting the band as a tourist attraction's economic efficacy (Cohen,

2017). Liverpool City Council significantly underestimated the immense tourism potential the Beatles could generate for their hometown, most notably exemplified when the original Cavern was demolished in 1974 to accommodate ventilation for underground railway lines (Cohen, 2017). The decision to demolish it seemed like a missed opportunity. Beatles tourism in Liverpool underwent a prolonged phase of undervaluation, with officials from the dissolved Merseyside County Council once lamenting that Liverpool continually "missed opportunities in terms of Beatles and pop music heritage" (Cohen, 2017, p. 173). Throughout the 1980s and even the 1990s, Liverpool lacked coherent tourism policies and organisational structures to address issues and facilitate communication amongst various marketing agencies (Bianchini and Parkinson, 1993).

Tourists keen on the Beatles found it challenging to obtain sufficient information regarding the link between Liverpool and the band. Consequently, fans have exerted significant effort over the years to foster the development of Beatles heritage in Liverpool, engaging in what they describe as a 'uphill battle to get Liverpool recognised as Beatle City', including lobbying for support from Liverpool City Council for plans such as the installation of Beatles statues as highway landmarks (Cohen, 2017, p. 28). In 1981, Bernadette Byrne, wife of musician Mike Byrne, was hired as a Liverpool city guide and was well known for her interest in Beatles and Merseybeat music, she even had rumours with George Harrison, Paul McCartney (Brocken, 2015). She observed a conspicuous lack of interest from the city council regarding pop music or the Beatles and noted a lack of commendable efforts in celebrating the musical heritage or formulating tourism strategies, and at that time, only two individuals, Ron Jones and Pam Wilsher were formally employed in the tourism sector (Brocken, 2015, p. 79). It was not until 1997 that reports suggest Liverpool began recognising the potential of its 'Beatles industry' (Grose, 1997).

A turning point came with the appointment of Michael Heseltine as City Minister in the aftermath of the 1981 Toxteth riots. His cultural regeneration programme, drawing on national trends to invest in heritage and creative industries, provided a

framework for repositioning Liverpool as a post-industrial cultural city (Brocken, 2015). At this point, art began to be linked to the cultural industry, which was classified as a growth industry, and art and cultural industry strategies emerged in some cities (Cohen, 2013, p. 538). Michael Heseltine began to shift the focus of his work from Liverpool to Southport, with plans to promote specific arts and regenerate of the cultural industries including museums, galleries, performing arts, heritage housing, film and cinema, media arts including television and radio, and community and ethnic arts projects (Liverpool City Council, 1987). These changes of cultural policy have been effective for the economic development of Liverpool. Besides, Michael Heseltine began to use the global attention that Lennon's death had brought to Liverpool as a catalyst for a broader-based regeneration and renewal programme. This programme fitted perfectly with the wider trend of the national government wanting to utilise heritage sites as a base for tourism (Homan, 2006). Michael Heseltine helped to set up the Merseyside Development Corporation in an attempt to make an impact on the Merseyside docks of Liverpool, Bootle, Wallasey and Birkenhead to transform (Brocken, 2015). So in the three years since 1981, the Beatles shop opened and work began on the redevelopment project Cavern Walks, a project that also includes a pub called Abbey Road and a cafe named Lucy. They hoped to revitalise these areas by improving their appearance, image and nighttime economy (Cohen, 2017). Even though many saw it as a government 'sop' to the city, it now appears that Michael Heseltine's decision was one of the most inspired appointments in Liverpool's modern history (Brocken, 2015, p. 82). Fainstein and Judd (1999) point out that the continual improvement of the city in order to welcome visitors has become a permanent feature of the city's political economy. Along with The Cavern, the Merseyside Maritime Museum and the Albert Dock are also part of the redevelopment.

Beginning in the early 1980s Beatles Week has been organised by Cavern City Tours (CCT) and has grown over the decades to become the world's premier Beatles event (Yates, Evans and Jones, 2016). Beatles Week usually takes place around the end of August, culminating over the August Bank Holiday weekend.

Bands from all over the world perform Beatles songs throughout Liverpool, including of course The Cavern. In addition to this, various parties, art exhibitions, souvenir shops, guest speakers' events and other Beatles-themed events take place during Beatles Week. Despite their commercial underpinnings, these events offer emotionally rich and participatory spaces that support the city's brand as a global music destination (Yates, Evans and Jones, 2016). Dominating tourism in Liverpool at this time was CCT, which was also the only city tour operator in Liverpool in the 1980s and 1990s (Cohen, 2017). Founded in 1983, CCT set up a daily 'Magical Mystery Tour' based on Beatles-related attractions, which of course is also the day trip that my supervisors Charlie and Rachel and I took at the start of my study. The buses are brightly coloured, precisely like those featured in the film *Magical Mystery Tour*.



Figure 52. Magical Mystery Tour Bus. Resource: Virgin Experience Days

In 1993, CCT launched the first Mathew Street Festivals, which began as tribute shows but has expanded over time. In its heyday, the August Bank Holiday weekend attracted hundreds of thousands of visitors while multiple stages were erected all over the streets of Liverpool. However in 2012 the Mathew Street Festivals were terminated due to security and funding issues caused by their size, and the Liverpool International Music Festival (LIMF) and other smaller events celebrating the city's musical heritage have since emerged. In 1997, Beatles Week

was recognised to be the second most popular annual tourist attraction after the Grand National by the Merseyside Tourism and Conference Bureau (Cohen, 2017).

In 1998, Visit Britain published a guide dedicated to the places that gave musicians inspiration. The interest of public sector organisations in the Beatles has been influenced by the close development of tourism and popular music (Cohen, 2017). The National Trust has purchased two buildings from the Beatles members' childhoods, John's 'Mendips' house and 20 Forthlin Road, and developed them as tourist attractions. They opened in 1998 and 2003 respectively. In Britain, the Blue Plaque is a commemorative scheme that marks buildings and sites associated with famous people or events. In 2000, John's Mendips in 251 Menlove Avenue was awarded Blue Plaque by English Heritage to commemorate. Prior to this, architecture of classical musicians and composers were the only music-related honors received (Cohen, 2017). Paul McCartney's 20 Forthlin Road, George Harrison's birthplace, 12 Arnold Grove and childhood home 174 Macket's Lane, Ringo's birthplace 9 Madryn Street also have been awarded blue plaque afterwards.

Liverpool has invariably witnessed the economic potential of its arts and tourism sectors becoming ingrained elements of its developmental trajectory. From the perspective of Tourism Studies, Liverpool has been shaped as a fan landscape that can be consumed through its pop culture significance (Wise, Melis, and Jimura, 2020, p. 4). The Beatles are central to Liverpool's identity as a pop culture destination, with various attractions and venues incorporating this concept (Wise, Melis and Jimura, 2020). The cityscape is punctuated with traces of The Beatles, with its urban brand manifesting pervasive cultural policy influences. Modern Liverpool has metamorphosed from its erstwhile industrialised port identity. Reclaimed docksides now host galleries, museums, restaurants, bars, and architecturally significant structures. Museums showcase artefacts from The Beatles and regular Beatles-themed performances. A plethora of Liverpool guided tours, such as the Magical Mystery Tour bus and the Fab Four Taxi, facilitate pilgrimages to Beatles-associated landmarks, including the childhood homes of

Lennon and McCartney (Leonard, 2013). Central Liverpool boasts the Cavern Walks shopping centre, the reconstituted Cavern Club, Beatles-centric stores, statues, and an 18-foot European Peace Monument. Echoes of the Beatles resonate in the city's souvenir shops, museums, and tour buses, embedding their musical legacy into Liverpool's essence (Kruse, 2005). Each song, seemingly anchored to a specific locale, continually reiterates the city's ongoing endeavours in Beatles nostalgia. Beyond mere touristic locales, an undercurrent of promotional activities persists, exemplified by the rebranding of the local airport as John Lennon International Airport. In 1964, Beatles alighted at the old North Terminal to rapturous fanfare, coinciding with the premiere of *A Hard Day's Night*.

Liverpool offers a myriad of British music experience hubs centred on the Beatles, spanning museums to bars, which cater to fans with a penchant for interactive ventures. These immersive experiences forge new societal realms for fan interactions. Kathryn Johnson, assistant curator of the David Bowie Is exhibit at the V&A Museum in 2013, emphasised interactive experiences and the dynamism of fan interpretation. She surmised the primary incentive for museum visits as an endeavour to convert the past into their present (Devereux, Dillane, and Power, 2015, p. 7). Experiential activities use nostalgia as a trigger, allowing visitors to connect their own experiences with the Beatles (Bagnall, 2003, cited in Van der Hoeven, 2018, p. 215). For contemporary visitors, visual stimuli typically supersede textual narratives. Despite curators presenting meticulously researched stories, the required reading patience and time investment might deter certain modern, younger enthusiasts. A good narrative, however profound, demands visual commitment for resonation (Hein, 2006). Contrasting with millennials, baby boomer fans are less inclined towards digital interpretations of museum spaces and prefer Beatles journeys that vivify cultural experiences beyond static displays. Beatles-themed art and music are becoming event mainstays, resulting in dedicated fan conventions. Celebratory events, such as Liverpool's Beatles week and the Fest for Beatles Fans – billed as the world's largest Beatles convention, are witnessing the emergence of diverse millennial fan archetypes. Millennial Beatles fans are internationalising the Beatles by using their expertise of 'new' mash-up art

forms, such as tribute bands, mash-ups, erotic storytelling (Womack and O'Toole, 2021).

Liverpool has been defined as an ideal tourist destination and investment location in the context of local political change (Jones and Wilks-Heeg, 2004). In 2016, the University of Liverpool, Liverpool John Moores University and the Institute of Popular Music of the University of Liverpool, collaborated to publish a report on the Beatles legacy. Professor Richard Evans (2016) from the London School of Economics and Political Science commented that this report clearly demonstrates that the Beatles' legacy brings huge economic benefits to Liverpool and has room for further growth. At the same time, Beatles-related attractions have boosted other tourist attractions, hotels, shops, and educational institutions (Hurst, 2016). The report noted that the Beatles generated almost £210 million and created 5,990 jobs in Liverpool directly, indirectly and catalytically. According to estimates by CCT managers, they host around 800,000 people a year, with approximately 55,000 people participating in the tours they organise. Visitors come from 25 different countries daily and 25-30% of the total number of visitors come from overseas (Yates, Evans and Jones, 2016). In Liverpool City Council's report on tourism in the city for 2022, it was shown that tourism had grown the local economy by £3.58 billion, a 46% increase from 2021, and that visitor numbers had increased by 32% since 2021 (Latcham, 2023). Janet Nuzum, manager of the visitor economy unit at growth platform, claims that by 2026 the region's economy will have grown by £250 million (Latcham, 2023). The most recent large-scale government investment came in 2021, when Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak pledged up to £2 million as part of the 2021 Liverpool budget to build a new Beatles attraction on Liverpool's waterfront (as shown in Figure 53).



Figure 53. Rishi Sunak's Budget announcement in 2021. Resource: Daily Express

The Pool is not a museum but will provide "an immersive experience" (quoted in BBC News, 2021). Pop music heritage tourism effectively demonstrates its strength and potential to Liverpool's city councils, allowing the public to recognise that Liverpool is not just a post-industrial city, but potentially a postmodern one (Brocken, 2015).

Even though the Beatles played an essential role in Liverpool's economic and cultural renaissance, paradoxically, residents have mixed feelings about the Beatles. Not everyone wants to attract tourists by honouring the Beatles, and these ambivalent locals do not want the city they live in to be turned into a major theme park, do not rely exclusively on tourism, and want other sources of employment (Du Noyer, 2002). Even Paul's brother, Mike McCartney, suggested that two separate memorials could be built, "rotten tomatoes could be thrown in one place and a bunch of roses in another" (Du Noyer, 2002). Some collectors act to cater for the niche market of Beatles enthusiasts rather than the broader cultural tourism market (Homan, 2006).

Now, the Beatles are no longer just a pop music maker, and become carriers of cultural memory (P. David Marshall, 2000). In a new understanding of cultural tourism, Tara Brabazon (2011, p. 35) noted that popular music is not a national industry, it is city industry, and through popular music, new groups and communities negotiate the meaning of the city in order to find an identity. This search for identity is ultimately presented itself now with the Beatles as Liverpool's

city brand. Karen Worcman and Joanne Garde-Hansen (2016, p. 44) refer to this process as social memory technology and represent memory as the creative remodelling of past memories. For fans, the place of Liverpool has a contextual and synonymous connection to Beatles music, a concept that fans have given to the city. Listeners fuse the Beatles, their music and Liverpool together according to their own understanding of them (Kruse, 2003). They come to Liverpool for their inner longing and identity, to see the city for what it is, to see what the Beatles had seen and to become enriched within themselves (Homan, 2006).

4.4 Generational Identity and Intergenerational Interaction

Within British culture, nostalgia serves as a means to stimulate the public's imagination, a method of materialising the past, and a therapeutic remedy for the public. As the public seeks healing or society necessitates adjustments, the tempo of nostalgia shifts. Mid-20th-century Britain witnessed a particular fondness for nostalgia, evoking a surge in public imagination across literature, theatre, and music (Sedikides et al., 2015). Consider The Beatles' Yesterday, Evelyn Waugh's Brideshead Revisited, John Osborne's Look Back in Anger or the beloved sitcom Dad's Army. These cultural artefacts wove nostalgia into the fabric of everyday life, giving it legitimacy as both emotional refuge and socio-political commentary. National media such as the James Bond film series employed trains and travel as visual metaphors of imperial longing, while simultaneously enacting modern narratives of cultural sophistication (Riquet and Zdrenyk, 2018). From Margaret Thatcher's invocation of Victorian values to Tony Blair's embrace of the Swinging Sixties under "Cool Britannia" (Urban, 2007), nostalgia emerged not as reactionary withdrawal, but as a curated memory politics embedded in nation-branding and political strategy.

These top-down appropriations of nostalgia found fertile ground in mass media rituals such as the 2012 Olympics opening ceremony. It showcased the world of the British industrial revolution, National Health Service, literary heritage, pop music, and culture, exemplifying how the nation nostalgically reveres its spirit and national legacy. Historical bio films are beginning to provide the ability to display history in some creative ways. Literary works often establish a sense of belonging through narrative structures, shared experiences, and relationships with endearing figures (Pierro et al., 2013). Films transform past tales into widely accepted truths, where the narrative details might become focal points of intense societal debate, aiding in cultivating profound nationalistic sentiments and belonging. This recurrent reinterpretation of past stories ushers multifaceted themes into contemporary times, epitomising the transformative essence of nostalgia (Pettey and Palmer, 2018). History was transformed into an alternative lifestyle choice,

and as Fredric Jameson (1991) articulated in *Postmodernism: The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, we seek history through our pop-cultural predilections.

As the cadence of nostalgia amplifies, recurrent challenges emerge. With the disintegration of a dominant modernist aesthetic paradigm, cultural creators are compelled to gaze retrospectively, becoming custodians and replicators of bygone styles. Reynolds (2011) posits that contemporary artists predominantly draw upon the oeuvres of late 20th-century predecessors for inspiration, perpetually "recycling" and regenerating their content. For example, Lana Del Rey's sound and aesthetics heavily reference the 1960s and 1970s. This mirrors Hollywood's film strategy of continuous remakes exploiting successive iterations of recycled culture (Vanderbilt, 1993). Postmodern scholars like Umberto Eco argue that the unreflective imitation of past styles, aesthetics, and cultural icons leads to the creation of hollow replicas, works that mimic the appearance of meaning or depth without actually containing it (Ruppel, 2009). Nostalgia often manifests through attachment to specific objects or symbols, which stand in as placeholders for emotional experiences or lost ideals. Iconic figures like the Beatles serve as prime examples of this phenomenon, where they become more than just a musical group, they transform into cultural artifacts that embody collective memories and feelings. Beatles persistently resurface as both concept and iconography, their ubiquitous figures cannot be avoided. Retroism astutely amalgamates historical elements with contemporary contexts. Charles Nostalgia was once perceived as a malaise, but it now lucratively commodifies idyllic retrospections (Panati, 1991). Deliberately crafted nostalgia-driven merchandise and media artefacts dominate the market.

Nostalgia was a substitute in the early period. Elizabeth Guffey (2006) notes that the realm of retro is not limited to a particular generation or the contemporary populace; individuals often express a preference and interest in popular music from times predating their birth. Beginning in the 1950s, a myriad of young folk revivalists performed traditional British music at clubs and festivals. This preserved folk music witnessed a resurgence facilitated by emerging media

technologies. A small section of music appeared in the repertoires of folk singers, pub pianists, and pop bands, with music hall songs frequently garnering acclaim in the 1960s (Bennett and Stratton, 2010). During a pivotal moment for the Beatles, they revisited British musical traditions, culminating in the inception of Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band. The evolution of British pop music offers a narrative on British society, embodying simultaneous regressions and advancements. 60s music groups were nostalgic for the days before the Americaninfluenced consumer era, those of the late 1970s reminisced about the wild and liberated 1960s. In the 1980s, people may have nostalgically idealized the early 60s for its pre-commercial innocence, even as they created a culture heavily influenced by media and consumerism. The 1990s and 2000s looked back fondly at the simple and pure nationalism of the 1970s. British pop music has perennially been a melting pot of diverse voices. As Derek Scott articulates, every group is ultimately a product of its era (Bennett and Stratton, 2010). The Beatles and other bands like the Rolling Stones and the Who forged a distinctive pop style in the 60s while was widely acknowledged as quintessentially British (Bennett and Stratton, 2010). Before the Beatles, no such bands existed in the US or the British, setting a precedent for what a band should encapsulate. The early 1980s saw many British neo-pop acts embracing futuristic nostalgia tinged with Central European historical epochs and fashion (Grönholm, 2015). The emergence of Britpop in the 1990s was a response to the culmination of Thatcherism (Betsabé, 2015). Recognised as the zenith of British pop music phenomena in the mid-1990s, Britpop is viewed as a return to Britishness, reigniting the spirit of the British Invasion pioneered by the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, the Kinks, the Who, and the Small Faces (Bennett and Stratton, 2010).

The nostalgic rhythms of music have always fluctuated in escapism, and each time a musical representation emerges it is born as a substitute for what came before. In youth culture, I can see the attitudes of youth towards society and their emergence is always linked to social decline. The 70s were not an innovative or epochal interval in the history of British pop music, glam rock and bubblegum pop were two influential music genres of the 1970s that both embraced theatricality,

fun, and a sense of escapism (Bennett and Stratton, 2010). The music industry is also becoming increasingly commercialised as record companies seek safer investments in an unstable economy. As a result, there were fewer and fewer pieces of music that were groundbreaking or genre-defining. In the late 70s, with the expansion of punk music some new musical areas emerged like ska and reggae, these new types of music styles were fused with the previous rock and roll, and reworked into new styles. Whether or not these new elements could be classified as "new" or as part of British pop music, they were a rehash of 60s Britain. From the late 1970s and early 1980s, as politics heated up, punk was used to revitalise popular music as a protest tool for youth culture (Worley, 2017). The aesthetic of punk defined its time in media and political discourse, the Sex Pistols' 'no future' matched the catastrophic language of the 1970s, and punk's images of aggression, rebellious and confrontationaltearing demonstrated a fear of social disintegration (Sabin, 2002).

Nostalgia keeps the music scene moving forward (Bennett and Stratton, 2010). Our perceptions fail to fully encapsulate the world's vastness, analogous to how the Beatles' aura surpasses our experiential comprehension. Upon their initial emergence, the Beatles seemed to be mere reflections of existing icons like Elvis Presley; however, their meteoric rise was unforeseen. Analogously, early film and television were perceived as ephemeral "phantoms," both domains began as specialised niches before achieving widespread prominence. The Beatles' musical contributions were not isolated creations; they were deeply rooted in American musical traditions, drawing inspiration from luminaries like Little Richard, Elvis Presley, and Buddy Holly (Kozinn, 1995). Their distinctive renditions of tracks originally performed by Carl Perkins, Chuck Berry, and Buddy Holly epitomised the quintessential rock 'n' roll resonance of the 1950s. Their unwavering commitment to technique, technological innovation, and individualistic expression laid the groundwork for the modernist movement and foreshadowed the Britpop phenomenon. In the 1990s, Britpop emerged as a cultural embodiment of nostalgia. In an interview with Q magazine, Paul McCartney lauded the lyrical craftsmanship and musical expertise of contemporary Britpop ensembles,

perceiving them as torchbearers of the Beatles' legacy (Bennett and Stratton, 2010).

This multigenerational recontextualisation of the Beatles reveals how nostalgia is not confined to those who directly experienced the 1960s. Enter the new century, the way fans express Beatlemania has changed over time and with the power of global communication, fan creativity is constantly undergoing extensions such as cover bands, original music, visual art, and graphic novels (Womack and O'Toole, 2021). These activities can transmit memories across generations and continuously build and renew communities through these memories (Van der Hoeven, 2014, cited in Van der Hoeven, 2018, p. 215). Millennial fans were born in an age where technology is ubiquitous in the world and they are more technologically advanced than before. Fans have entered the Web 2.0 era where older fans and newer Millennial fans interact through X, Instagram, Facebook groups, and YouTube. They even plan events and develop their own favourite journeys (Berman, 2008). Fans could post their experiences of attending events on social media, photographs taken of the places they travelled to, and souvenirs become merchandise of a personalised nature (Mills, 2019). Many tribute bands also market themselves through X and Facebook (Berman, 2008). The internet has become an infinite database and archive, with a vast collection of digitised materials, transforming tangible objects back into intangible ones, filling these more practical and inexhaustible spaces (Roberts, 2014, p. 271). Fans can enter virtual spaces at any time to access memories and images (Geraghty, 2014). In addition, people love streaming on these electronics, and we need to bring them into the new age, as if they will never die out as long as their music is still available on iTunes or Spotify (Womack and O'Toole, 2021). As everything about the Beatles becomes digital, the boundaries between past and present become increasingly loose, and physical objects such as the music of tribute bands and Beatles walks can be reinvented through digital collaborations (Mills, 2019). The new millennial Beatles fan is no longer retrospectively nostalgic, they are increasingly interactive and they want to be involved. For example, they mashed new and old Beatles'

videos into a bricolage texts and uploaded them to YouTube, which is progressive nostalgia (Womack and O'Toole, 2021, p. 243).

This intergenerational negotiation of meaning highlights the enduring influence of the Beatles not only as a cultural symbol of the 1960s but also as a flexible symbol in the process of identity construction. Their legacy is constantly being reshaped through digital platforms, tribute culture, and media adaptations, enabling new generations to participate in both personal and collective memory-building practices. Through social media, participatory performances, and digital archives, the dynamic interaction between older and younger generations of fans demonstrates how nostalgia serves as a bridge across temporal divides. This shows that nostalgia not only has the power to preserve but also the power to innovate. Their music and imagery act as a mirror reflecting social change, continuing to shape and define the outline of British culture.

4.5 Gendered Nostalgia and Affective Empowerment

Changes in leisure after the war allowed many young female fans to confidently move in and out of music venues in the city and beyond, and these teenage girls were recognised by the public as participants in the community (Feldman-Barrett, 2021). In a broader sense, Beatlemania impacted the cultural expansion and public changes in society, especially when tied to women, gender, and sexual orientation. This phenomenon signified a consciousness of being told: we can do anything (Stark, 2005). In the early 60s, sociologists observed a noticeable increase in sexual content in mass media over the past decade. Girls were no longer defined as 'good', 'pure', or the guardians of chastity in teenage society (Ewens, 2020). Women began to seek liberation in various areas of life, for many of whom this journey started with the Beatles (Cura, 2011). Although the disruptive behaviour of female fans contravened societal norms, it subtly affirmed the entrenched gender stereotypes and the concept of male superiority (Campbell, 2020). Before the Beatles emerged on the music scene, young girls were silent bearers of family responsibilities and controlled by their parents (Cura, 2011). Susan Douglas (1994) points to Beatlemania as a crucial turning point in the evolution of girl culture. Under established norms of the era, girls were expected to be dull and traditional, but Beatlemania provided a platform for adventurous young women to express their personalities and charisma, finding their individual significance in the process (Feldman-Barrett, 2021). Thousands of girls demonstrated their defiance of authority, social conventions, and commitment to independence through their screams. They were unwilling to compromise on taking up traditional roles (Campbell, 2020). Candy Leonard (2016) recalled in Beatlenes that media criticism made her aware of the vast world and realised she had the right to explore this broader world.

This affective rebellion, often dismissed as hysteria, performed a gendered politics of presence. Drawing on Sara Ahmed's theory of affective economies (2004), such public emotional expressions redistributed social feelings: frustration, desire, longing into spaces traditionally closed to female intensity. Screams, then, were

not merely irrational but formed collective emotional gestures that reasserted young women's agency within postwar patriarchal structures.

The cultural phenomenon of Beatlemania intersected with feminism and women's history. Starting in the 60s, Beatlemania propagated "Across the Universe" (both a song and a concept) (Cura, 2011, p. 112). Many girls in the United States, the United Kingdom, and other places began reconfiguring their worldviews and surrounding cultures, with an increasing number of sociocultural categories providing resources for these changes in worldview (Feldman-Barrett, 2013). For example, British feminist Sheila Rowbotham strongly opposed traditional female concepts of her mother's generation and expressed her opposition through other literary and artistic methods. Writer Andrew August (2009) noted that Sheila and her contemporaries challenged the traditional gender roles of the 1950s. They pursued education, careers, sexual freedom, and autonomy by embracing the new youth culture. By the mid-60s, popular music had become pivotal in this groundbreaking youth culture (August, 2009). Many young women from different countries formed all-female bands due to their love for the Beatles, with Beatlemania inspiring their creativity and productivity, such as SHEatles in Figure 54 (Feldman-Barrett, 2013).

This generative transformation of fan culture into productive action resonates with Angela McRobbie's (1990) argument on feminine agency in post-feminist popular culture, where young women construct subjectivity through aesthetic and cultural labour. The creation of female tribute bands demonstrates a performative engagement with nostalgia that is not passive longing but active reappropriation of gendered cultural history.



Figure 54. Female Beatles Tribute Band—The SHEatles. Resource: The SHEatles Facebook

These girls transitioned from consumers to "prosumers" under the influence of the modernist spirit (Jones, 2011). Contemporary feminist scholars like Barbara Ehrenreich (1992) consider Beatlemania a "dramatic uprising of a female sexual revolution" (quoted in Cura, 2011, p. 105). Early women's liberation marches drew inspiration from solidarity among female Beatles fans, who united for a cause rather than the band, with the Beatles merely serving as a catalyst (Campbell, 2020). Through screams, letters, scrapbooks, and fan rituals, female fans actively constructed new affective communities and practices of selfhood that prefigured later feminist interventions. The unique feature of the Beatles was the stratified distribution of their audience, which included women from different fields across various regions (Cura, 2011, p. 105). Beatlemania provides an opportunity for women to free themselves from expected gender norms and shows women that they can have the right to do whatever they want, it is a rise in consciousness (Cura, 2011). The Beatles were one of the significant "events" that led to changes in girls and young women in the 60s. It developed into a tenacious music and pop culture phenomenon, whose impact continues into the 21st century (Feldman-Barrett, 2021). Therefore, the Beatles were not simply the objects of female fantasy

but also the catalysts through which gender roles, emotional labour, and female agency were publicly renegotiated. The Beatles' cultural presence provided a symbolic and material space in which young women negotiated visibility, autonomy, and identity on their own terms.

The female audience became a powerful force in promoting the Beatles' music, and this group of female fans pushed the Beatles in wider and broader circles and began to enrich their lives as well (Feldman-Barrett, 2021). The Beatles members also realised that the attention and participation of female listeners was significant to them. Some female fans would add their own experiences to cover songs and songwriting, that made Liverpool the actual starting point of the Beatles' female history (Feldman-Barrett, 2021). The Beatles taught these female fans a lot about life and the future, and the city of Liverpool is full of her stories, even after the Beatles were no longer a band, these women still lived here to carry on their lives (Feldman-Barrett, 2021). This interaction between place, memory and gender has made Liverpool a gendered archive, containing the remnants of emotional memory and female cultural labour.

4.6 Nostalgia, Trauma and Cultural Repair

Nostalgia often arises during periods of socio-cultural turbulence, functioning not merely as a sentimental longing for the past but as a critical affective and psychological response to perceived threats in the present. Fred Davis (1979) identifies nostalgia as a pervasive response to uncertainty and dissatisfaction, asserting that it emerges particularly during historical moments when the coherence of the present is destabilised.

Psychologist Clay Routledge, drawing on theories from clinical research, points out that people habitually use nostalgia as a self-protective mechanism to cope with pain. Nostalgia is a state that people form during periods of change and disruptive life events (Cox, 2018). Ecological and societal pressures are gradually testing and challenging people's ability to cope, such as the 2020 Covid-19 outbreak, which left many people fearing for their lives, in addition to economic pressures that surged as businesses closed, leading to job losses and financial strain pressures that prompted rapid changes in lifestyles and mindsets. Nostalgia can be seen as an adaptive psychological resource to face social threats and threats to the self, supporting anxiety relief by softening the blow of stress or building meaning in life (Sedikides et al, 2015). From this perspective, nostalgia becomes a collective coping strategy, stabilising social meaning systems and offering affective solidarity.

Nostalgia also operates at a collective-national level, where it is mobilised not only by individuals but also by institutions and state apparatuses in response to sociopolitical rupture. Collective national nostalgia helps to reduce stress, and it is a physiological and mental response that nostalgia exists at this time as a means of regulation, keeping people balanced between pressure and stability (Sedikides et al., 2015). Fred Davis (2011) observes that in the aftermath of numerous unfortunate events experienced collectively, nostalgia can enhance social solidarity. The stress caused by these events often triggers historical imaginings, reminding and reawakening the collective resilience displayed by citizens in past crises. Nostalgia itself can prompt individuals to change and reassess their

specific perceptions of the past (Boym, 2001). The interaction between nostalgia and national identity reacts when society is under threat. In a global context, local populations often seek a sense of belonging to cope with the pressures of incoming outsiders (Calhoun, 2016).

The pluralistic cultural context makes nostalgia is neither new nor old, but inevitable, and that it often occurs in the context of unease or dissatisfaction with the present. It recognises that nostalgia is often a means of stimulating the public imagination, a way of concretising the past, and a therapeutic approach to public. When people thought about war, they would not just recall the war itself. It will be associated with a series of events that are like dominoes, awakening what may be many negative emotions. In the period following major social change, we often use the concept of trauma when confronted with the negative impacts left behind, that is, the trauma of change inflicted on the changing body of society (Sztompka, 2000). For example, the collapse of working-class stability in Britain in the 1970s, widespread unemployment and crime triggered a traumatic feeling of social distancing. Society is filled with anxiety, insecurity and moral panic on a wide scale (Thompson, 1998). The loss of collective identity causes people to become apathetic, negative, and helpless, with pessimism about the future, matched by nostalgic images of the past (Alexander, Eyerman and Giesen, et al., 2004).

The effects of traumatic events can cause people to perceive negative emotions, including painful, harmful, unpleasant, distasteful (Sztompka, 2000). Cultural trauma is overwhelmingly negative, caused mainly by some failure or adverse event, such as the transatlantic slave trade. Trauma is essential in Freud's psychotherapy, noting that childhood fantasies confer such an important aetiology, and cultural trauma needs to be discussed as well (Freud, 1939). Some trauma may not come from any traumatic event that actually happened, but is simply rooted in the widespread imagination of such events (Sztompka, 2000). This aligns with the sociological framework developed by W.I. Thomas and Dorothy Thomas (1928), "If people define situations as real, then their consequences are real" (Thomas and Thomas, 1928, p. 572). This means that people's perceptions

and interpretations of a situation, regardless of whether those perceptions are objectively accurate, can lead to real consequences in their actions and social interactions. Essentially, any previous definition of a situation affects the trajectory of life and the person's personality. Thomas emphasises social issues like intimacy, family or education as ways of detecting a social world. Trauma occurs with the assistance of the environment, and historical events are both socially and culturally traumatizing (Alexander, Eyerman and Giesen, et al., 2004). Thus, when cultural trauma is framed through nostalgic remembrance, it activates not only emotions but also social responses, from commemorative practices to heritage policy.

In the context of cultural trauma, core groups refer to dominant or majority groups in society, who tend to hold more social, economic or cultural power. They are more likely to feel the effects of cultural trauma strongly when major social changes challenge or disrupt the status quo in their favour. For example, in post-Brexit Britain, groups that strongly identify with traditional British values and institutions are likely to feel the effects of social change more acutely than other groups. The immigrant or diasporic populations often interpret the same historical episodes through the lens of displacement, exclusion, or colonial violence (Calhoun, 2016). Marginalised groups are those on the social, economic or political periphery who often do not have equal access to resources, representation or power in society. These groups may not experience cultural trauma in the same way because they do not fit into the dominant cultural narrative or identity to the same extent as core groups. For example, immigrant communities or ethnic minorities may respond differently to social change because they may not feel integrated into the traditional cultural narratives that core groups hold. When historical memory is established as a national trauma, the trauma has to be actively maintained and reproduced to ensure social status, which is the difference between cultural trauma and psychological trauma (Alexander, Eyerman and Giesen, et al., 2004).

This reveals an important contradiction at the heart of cultural nostalgia: while it can unify through shared memory, it can also deepen divisions by elevating certain pasts over others. The institutionalisation of nostalgia whether in political discourse, media, or museum practice, thus participates in an ongoing struggle over which histories are preserved, which traumas are acknowledged, and which futures are imagined. In this sense, nostalgia is not merely reactive but constitutive: it shapes the very contours of collective identity and social repair.

While cultural nostalgia often emerges from conditions of rupture and vulnerability, it can also be a productive site for cultural repair. Nostalgia's apparent sentimentality and backward gaze need not preclude progressive potential; rather, when harnessed reflectively, nostalgia can enable communities to reimagine and reconstruct their sense of self (Radstone, 2007). In the creative mode of nostalgia, we can adapt to ongoing change, and the past and images that attract us are brought to the surface (Grönholm, 2015). Restorative nostalgia and reflective nostalgia will coexist here, and with paranoid determination, people begin to their lives with reflective nostalgia's thoughts and judgements (Boym, 2001).

This potential is evident in the afterlives of the Beatles as cultural symbols. While their imagery and music often serve as nostalgic touchstones for a golden age, they are also continuously reinterpreted by newer generations and diverse communities, including those historically marginalised. Through tribute performances, fan-made media, museum exhibitions, and digital archives, nostalgic engagement with the Beatles can move beyond romanticisation into acts of creative reworking. These processes that allow for the expression of intergenerational continuity, affective healing, and symbolic renewal. In this way, nostalgia becomes not a retreat from trauma but a means of narrating through it.

The case study findings presented in this chapter reveal the complex and multilayered ways in which the Beatles function as a cultural legacy through which nostalgia is expressed, performed, and reimagined. From institutional preservation and fan pilgrimages to intergenerational transmission and gendered

empowerment, the Beatles' legacy operates not merely as a static cultural memory but as an evolving site of emotional, social, and symbolic engagement. Across each thematic section, it shows clear that nostalgia is not a uniform sentiment but a dynamic affective structure, which can produce identification, critique, healing, and cultural transformation. As a historical subject and symbolic figure, the Beatles have become the intersection of a wider range of issues such as time, memory and meaning.

Chapter 5: Discussion/Analysis

Nostalgia, which is as evocative as the emotions it describes, has long been regarded as simply missing the past. As my research reveals, nostalgia contains strong complex rhythms belonging to memory and heritage that are in turn transformative. The concept of the 'rhythm of nostalgia', which encapsulates the temporal dynamics of nostalgia and emphasises its recurring nature, proposes that nostalgia functions in a rhythmic pattern similar to that of a musical beat, influencing how individuals and cultures revisit and reinterpret their past. Rooted in the Beatles' cultural heritage, this holistic research approach seeks to reveal the profound impact of nostalgia on memory and legacy, offering an unprecedented perspective on how we engage with the past.

5.1 The Definition of the Rhythm of Nostalgia

The rhythm of nostalgia, as proposed in this study, refers to the structured temporal and affective movement through which nostalgic experiences emerge, recur, and transform. It denotes a patterned emotional temporality that links personal and collective memory with iterative cultural reproduction.

The rhythm of nostalgia can be seen as a logic function or routine that applies throughout the range of nostalgia domains. Nostalgic rhythms transcend borders and eras, resonating with the universal human experience of longing for the past, finding comfort in the familiar, and seeking connection and meaning at the same time (Boym, 2001). Nostalgia will gradually progress as people discover and explore it. Nostalgia is a way of knowing the world, and psychoanalysis has turned nostalgia towards an understanding of existence and desire, especially in patriarchal societies, where it is associated with a sense of lost fulfilment (Radstone, 2010). The nostalgic function structure and the mise-en-abyme structure share common ground; mise-en-abyme is a French term meaning put in the abyss, revived by French novelist André Gide (Dällenbach, 1989). Originating from heraldry, it refers to a smaller shield placed within a larger one bearing the same design (Macey, 2001, p. 256). In English, it approximates to images-withinimages, manifesting as a repeated internal replication of the overall artistic image, thus creating an infinite series of images that vanish into the intangible, akin to observing one's reflection between two mirrors (Hawthorne, 1998, p. 138). In literature and theory, it can describe a story within a story, mirrors reflecting mirrors, or any such recursive sequence. Claude Magny's (1950) research further developed André Gide's ideas, incorporating mathematical elements, asserting that the 'flow' of narrative events and 'character fate' in a finite space could be the refraction of other precedents (quoted in Snow, 2016, p. 38). Under this concept, it shares a resonance with my nostalgic rhythm. The concept of mise-en-abyme provides a methodological insight into how nostalgic rhythm unfolds. Each recursive representation, whether it is a tribute, a cover version, or a mediated retelling, constitutes a temporal layering that extends the nostalgic affect forward

while looping back to an idealised past. Simply put, mise-en-abyme possesses infinite possibilities, where any imaginative node can be rewritten and reimagined, thus approaching infinite potential and value. When applied to nostalgic rhythm, it reveals the recursive nature of cultural consumption and the stratification of memory, with each iteration of memory adding depth and complexity to the last.

The philosophical underpinnings of nostalgia ensure that it is integrated with the fabric of time, memory and identity, and in the rhythms I emphasise the cyclical nature of nostalgia, whereby the past is repackaged and reintroduced into the cultural mainstream from time to time, each time with new interpretations and meanings. Svetlana Boym (2007) wrote that nostalgia may appear as a longing for a place, but it is fundamentally a yearning for a different time. Kirsten Hastrup (1997) has remarked that memory does not preserve the past but adapts it to current conditions. This suggests that the content of the past is reinterpreted in light of the present during each nostalgic moment, with nostalgia from the same period possessing various dimensions of origin, encompassing both individual creativity and collective cohesion. A generation's nostalgic sentiment is both preserved and continually recreated. Nostalgia is perpetually an emotion on the move, once you genuinely arrive at that memory, the nostalgic feeling dissipates. In Shakespeare's Hamlet, the protagonist asserts "the time is out of joint". When a ghost from the past appears in the present, it cannot strictly be said to belong to the past (Fisher, 2013). Nostalgia is not "antimodern", yet it is not synonymous with modernity either; it coexists within the same dimension as modernity (Boym, 2001). The nostalgic individual aspires to access or transcend temporal boundaries, standing beside time. As I have discussed, nostalgia is a paradoxical longing, an amalgam of desire and reason that propels the self beyond its current state. Its rhythm transcends simple categorisation, manifesting in various forms such as reflective or restorative nostalgia (Boym, 2001). The intermediating nature of nostalgia and its relationship with objects and memory posits that nostalgia may oscillate between reason and desire, questioning its innate versus induced nature. Nostalgia can be regarded as a form of knowledge, an analytical turn towards understanding existence and desire. It is not a passive longing but an active

engagement with the past, functioning as a pattern that transcends temporal and spatial boundaries, resonating with the human yearning for bygone times.

Nostalgia's function is paradoxical: it renders the past proximate while simultaneously reinforcing its irretrievability. Nostalgia returns with a specific rhythm, in a unique manner and cadence. A reality that once did not exist is a fact that will never exist; we cannot artificially alter this fact due to nostalgia, and the future will not emerge within our perceived past (Gregg and Seigworth, 2010). Like other products of consciousness, the past within memory requires discovery, excavation, organisation, extraction, reconstruction, and relaunching. The creation of nostalgia involves the infusion of a powerful belief that things from the past are superior to what is about to emerge in the present (Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy, 2011). Nostalgia runs forward from its present point of emergence to a past point, yet this incessant process resides in the future (Boym, 2001). I believe it progresses through time and into the future, like mise-en-abyme, in an infinite function equation.

Nostalgia is no longer seen as a spontaneous behaviour but has a central discipline. Postmodern nostalgia emphasises the fragmentation and reconstruction of the past, intertwining with the rhythms of nostalgia by challenging our perceptions of authenticity and originality. Our longing for the past is often a longing for a narrative, a story we tell ourselves about "who we were" and "who we are". This narrative is a crucial element in the rhythm of nostalgia. The rhythm of nostalgia encapsulates the cyclical and patterned nature of the experience of nostalgia, a concept that recognises that nostalgia is not a static backdrop to our lives but rather an active participant that influences our emotional connection to the past through its rhythmic presence. In the rhythm of nostalgia, I see it as an intangible but perceptible pattern that not only glorifies our past experiences but also orchestrates our emotional responses to them.

In this world, the past is not only remembered but also revisited and reimagined, with the Beatles epitomizing the operation of nostalgia within the mise-en-abyme framework. Their legacy demonstrates the functioning of mise-en-abyme: stories

within stories, songs within songs, endlessly reflecting and refracting through the prism of cultural memory. Each act of commemoration or tribute is a smaller reflection of the Beatles' larger cultural memory, with every new generation discovering their music adding another layer to this recursive structure. The nostalgic transformation, revisitation, and renewal of the Beatles' music inspire the rhythm of collective consciousness. Each cover of a Beatles song, each reissued album, and each retelling of their story is a reflection nested within the larger narrative of their myth. These layered replications and reflections form a mise-en-abyme that captures the essence of nostalgia—not a static longing for the past but a dynamic, unfolding process. An ever-expanding mise-en-abyme, extending to the horizon of cultural memory. In this reflective process, the nostalgic rhythm represents a steady flow of time. With each echo of the nostalgic rhythm, each repetition is a new opportunity for rediscovery and reinterpretation. When a tribute band plays in a modern Cavern Club, they recreate not just the music but also the ambience and energy of an era. In the mise-en-abyme cycle, The Beatles themselves are both the original image and the reflection, both reality and myth. The Beatles' music, their stories, and their image are all part of this resonant structure, as profound and expansive as the abyss in which it resides.

As my research unfolds, the rhythm of nostalgia is revealed as a perceptible pattern that underscores our interaction with the past and orchestrates our steps into the future. This rhythm transcends a mere reiteration of time. It functions like a robust bridge enabling an active engagement with the past, neither passive nor escapist, but vibrantly participating in shaping contemporary culture. This research is not merely a chronological record but an innovative approach that dialogues between the past and present. It invites readers to witness how nostalgia shapes our cultural identity. Investigating a globally recognised and beloved theme such as the Beatles paves numerous paths for future research. It will prompt scholars to continue exploring the rhythms and patterns of nostalgia across different cultures and historical periods, expanding our understanding of this potent emotional and cultural force. Through this research, we will also come to realise that the Beatles' story is our story, and to be nostalgic for the past is to be nostalgic for the present.

At the heart of the rhythm of nostalgia is cyclicality, which reflects the natural ebb and flow of human emotions and the way we as individuals and as a society process and relive the past. The cyclical nature of nostalgia is a narrative device that reflects and refracts time to gather material for future nostalgia, while today's nostalgia relates to evolving entities. This cyclicality is reflected in how certain music, fashions and even ideologies seem to fade away, only to reappear years later, be rekindled by a new generation, or be rediscovered in a new context.

In sum, the rhythm of nostalgia is not merely a repetitive longing but an ontological structure through which time, memory, and identity are continuously refracted and renegotiated. It proposes a dialectic that reconciles past and future through affective circulation, enabling a deeper understanding of how cultural memory operates in late modernity. Through the Beatles, this rhythm finds both its expression and its expansion, making visible the recursive logic of longing that defines contemporary subjectivity.

5.2 The Rhythm of Nostalgia's Application to Various Contexts

Nostalgia serves as a narrative device to reflect and refract time, and our present lives are accumulating material for future nostalgia, so nostalgia is something that is in a constant state of development. Fashion and nostalgia work cyclically; fashion and pop music consistently parasitise the past in some manner, signifying that entities reminiscent of the Beatles are perpetually re-circulated. The nostalgia cycle symbolises ideological implantation. Governments and markets integrate this recyclable nostalgia into products and habits, using it as a control mechanism. Nostalgia is more than a fashion or market trend; its build-up over time and space suggests deeper meanings (Niemeyer, 2014). This is the reality we need to face in understanding nostalgia in our current society. The rise of global media networks means that events, styles, trends, fashions and other future forms of nostalgia could be instantly disseminated, fermented and processed (Hajek, Lohmeier and Pentzold, 2016). Entertainment and fashion, like consumables and technology, are constantly being competed for and eliminated. Due to the pressure of life, people don't have enough patience and time to enjoy the current culture and feel the experience that each nostalgic style brings. Many young people are beginning to engage with nostalgic trends, keen to be able to experience a diverse range of nostalgia in a short period and even future nostalgia trends. But the rhythm of nostalgia will not provide such an opportunity, the rhythm of nostalgia will give nostalgia the quality required. This gradual stabilisation is a regulatory property of nostalgia as a rhythm itself. Therefore in order to better highlight the universality of nostalgic rhythms, I will draw inspiration from the specific instance, which crosses different cultural contexts and time boundaries. I will integrate this rhythm of nostalgia into the broader discussion in the previous section, where I see nostalgia as an ever-present dynamic force shaping cultural identity, consumer behaviour and urban development.

5.2.1 Stitching Old with New: The Regulatory Landscape of Nostalgic Fashion

Fashion as Nostalgic Cyclical Undertaking

Nostalgia is prevalent with many vintage shops opening up all over the world, and even the tourism industry in some regions using vintage shops as a gimmick to attract tourists. Even though we are not professional fashionistas, we still can find some vintage items, second hand clothes and vintage styled trendy clothing in the shops, such as throwback jerseys, retro kits, sport throwback uniforms. From the second half of the 20th century, secondhand clothing began to be popular with the emergence of subcultures, young people who appreciated alternative lifestyles were keen on secondhand clothes, and the nostalgia-wave of the 1970s brought an increase in secondhand consumption (Eicher, 2005). The past has been redesigned for contemporary fashion and has received renewed popularity (Niemeyer, 2014). British cultural theorist Angela McRobbie (1989) noted that wearing vintage fashion was considered part of the nostalgia trend in the 1980s, a way of bringing history into the present. Vintage is the construction of past images and historical appearances; vintage clothing is a process of recreation using cultural signals and historical (Eicher, 2005). The Edwardian era represents the last golden age before the Great War, a time of relative social stability and the last vestiges of innocence (Savage, 2007). Much of the culture of the 1960s was based on nostalgia for 'glorious empire', such as 'Granny Takes a Trip', who made their own designs using vintage clothing and late 19th and early 20th century graphics.

Past objects do not carry any nostalgia in and of themselves due to the fact that we, as users of the objects, artificially endow them with certain content (Ruppel, 2009). In my mind, people often associate the past with the present, but speak of their past selves and present selves as split into two subjects. Nostalgia plays a key role in the consumption of vintage fashion, the clothes hide the stories and memories preserved through the transmission of clothes (Cassidy and Bennett, 2012). The purchase of clothing helps to connect with past times. People are able to travel to the past and promote self continuity by getting in touch with the desired past (Sierra and McQuitty, 2007). Nostalgia is the raw material for a range of fashion items, can be shaped, adapted, and modernized to fit contemporary tastes

(Veenstra and Kuipers, 2013). The past a source of fashion inspiration, designers can look for inspiration that transcends time and adapts to a new era (Montgomery, 2020). The retro effect of clothing comes from the reproduction of vintage patterns and the retro looks and the visual stimulation and the subtle connection to stories from decades ago (Eicher, 2005).

In waves of nostalgia, I observe shifts in fashion trends, with a recurring time span of 15 to 20 years. This interval ensures novelty without provoking visual fatigue due to excessive repetition, and avoids spanning two distinct age cohorts, thereby minimising potential generational disconnects. This 15-20 year period facilitates acceptance across all age groups without causing abrupt transitions. In recent fashion stages, I've noted the reappearance of designs from two to three decades prior, albeit with modifications such as colour changes, detailed alterations, and sleeve length adjustments. It also marks the onset of cyclical nostalgia. Taking the Drainpipe trousers as an example: initially a uniform for the Teddy boys, they surged in popularity during the 1960s thanks to the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. By the 1970s, they transformed into bell bottoms and flared jeans, and by 2011, they had reemerged as skinny jeans, a staple in both men's and women's fashion. The 1970s punk movement borrowed heavily from the youth cultures of the 1950s and 60s, particularly the Mods. Subsequent generations have adapted and globalised the Mods style, turning it into a continually replicated trend (Eicher, 2005). The 1980s and 1990s clearly influenced the fashion sensibilities of younger generations, from high-waisted jeans to velvet clothing, capturing the ambience of the 1990s (Su, 2019). Designers often turn to history for inspiration, fervently incorporating elements emblematic of a bygone era without bearing its historical weight (Vanderbilt, 1993). The initial designs of the fashion brand Ralph Lauren evoke the wild, untamed America West, offering nostalgic imperialists an opportunity to relive the empire's glory days (Vanderbilt, 1993). The cult Scandi brand, Stine Goya, announced that its second store, Goya Gallery, would be an "archive store," allowing customers the chance to purchase past-season items they missed out on initially. Vintage brand Rixo collaborated with 1980s fashion icon Christian Lacroix for its Fall/Winter 2020 collection, showcasing signature

patterns, with designer Henrietta Rix stating, "The quality, timelessness, and cyclical nature of vintage are what inspire us" (Montgomery, 2020). Vintage clothing has gained global fashion system recognition, and it is imperative to acknowledge fashion's cyclic nature. Given this, one could argue that fashion is cyclical, and it is merely rehashing clichés from previous eras. The pace of consumer upgrades and youth-oriented shifts is accelerating, a negative consequence of a fast-paced lifestyle. Distinct styles often reemerge with new names and streamlined details, making nostalgic fashion increasingly costeffective (Veenstra and Kuipers, 2013). As part of production costs, nostalgia is becoming industrialised. I thought this is the challenge that nostalgia needs to face in fashion, gradually returning to the pace after a gradual acceleration.

Nostalgia is triggered through a familiar pattern

The purchase of secondhand clothing is seen as a consumption of the past, a representation of the past (Eicher, 2005). Clothing is part of private space and when people re-wear clothes that belong to that era, it gives them a sense of actually living in that era, which is part of 'nostalgic escapism' (Davis, 2011). For example, people who were teenagers in the 1960s wear Mod style clothes again like they are going back to their youth. It is a revival of time and going back to a memory place. Many people often turn to fashion as a coping mechanism and a tool for self-expression during bad experiences, and choosing the right vintage items helps people look back at a particular stage in their lives and feel nostalgic again (Khair and Malhas, 2022). Individuals' emotions, senses and imagination are also triggered in situations where the wider social environment remains in crisis (Khair and Malhas, 2022). Nostalgia is a common theme among all participants of social unrest, like Covid-19 in 2020, people automatically recall their previous lives and c phrasing from an earlier time will give them hope that they can return to their previous lives. Like people in the 70's, often keep the mentality of "Old is the new me" (Amatulli et al., 2021).

In the nearly 20 years, fast fashion has gone full circle from its emergence to its peak to its demise, and although young consumers can quickly purchase celebrity

inspired outfits, the disposal of clothing is just as fast as fast fashion updates (Centobelli, 2022). This could be seen in the style of the new season arrivals from fast fashion brands Zara and H&M. Alexandra Palmer and Hazel Clark (2005) point out that the popularity of vintage fashion is a response to fast fashion, where mass production has allowed many people to wear the same clothes. To escape from this trend, wearing one-of-a-kind clothing started to become an option for young people to show their uniqueness (DeLong, Heinemann and Reiley, 2005). Vintage has now moved from a subculture to a popular culture, with a preference for classic styles and various fashionable vintage styles (American Vintage, Y2K) reoccurring in teenagers' wardrobes. For young people, vintage styles can prompt them to look for examples of self-expression, build a sense of time and history, and they may even find the kind of person they want to be on the way to looking for retro styles.

Vintage fashion serves as a form of self-expression, signalling a societal statement (McNeill and Venter, 2019). The quest for authenticity in retro fashion has reinforced the rise of secondhand clothing as individuals seek to establish their uniqueness and individuality (Parsons, 2000). Fashion retail expert Mary Portas noted that economic recessions have shifted our focus towards the value of items, with an apparent rise in consumers opting for high-quality secondhand garments (Cavendish, 2009). In 2022, the secondary clothing market saw a 24% increase compared to the previous year, reaching a market capitalisation of \$119 billion (Diaz, 2023). According to a report by thredUP, this growth trend is observed globally, with North America accounting for approximately 42% of the entire market. Projections indicate that by 2026, the global secondhand fashion market will expand by 127%, with an anticipated total valuation of \$218 billion (Diaz, 2023). In a society undergoing constant transformation due to technological advancements, there's an intensified longing for familiar things, becoming more efficient than ever before (Palmer, 2005). Nostalgia marketing has expanded clothing sales into more diverse markets such as Portobello Road in London, Blue Rinse and the big flea market in Manchester and vintage clothing website Judy's Vintage (Eicher, 2005).

Meanwhile, the vintage nostalgia fashion craze has peaked online, especially on social networking sites such as Facebook and X which have also increased the availability of vintage fashions, it is common to see information about events and adverts for vintage fair expositions, which are permitted by the sites. Instagram has become the ground for fashion nostalgia, with user Nineties Anxiety as a leader in vintage fashion, it established an account in 2018 and already has over a million followers (Montgomery, 2020). Nostalgia has started to become an overtly collective mode of living (Davis, 1979). Such as recent popular dressing style Old Money, in contrast to the Y2K, retro movement and subculture of the 90's, the old money dressing style emphasizes understated elegance, timeless silhouettes, and high-quality materials in neutral colours, avoiding flashy logos in favor of refined, classic sophistication. These characteristics make young people scramble to imitate them. Rom-Com Core is considered the latest fashion trend for the 2023 season, born from romantic comedy film character such as Mia Thermopolis from The Princess Diaries, and filled with a sense of unrealistic idealism. But for people who have just gone through tough times, this style of film is the option to grant themselves a brief escape from reality, and Rom-Com Core has been called the fashion version of a spiritual massage. Many users have taken to social media to post the look of the protagonist they aspired to be in their youth, and this has become the theme of a new generation of short videos. These incredibly nostalgic fashion have resonated with the many people, especially since the nostalgic emotional response these fashions elicit makes people more eager than ever to look back or reflect on the past (Montgomery, 2020).

5.2.2 Nostalgic Nationalism: A Collective Memory's Refuge in Times of Stress

Mentions of Britain often conjure images of an ancient and tranquil nation that has been nostalgically inclined for a prolonged period (Fox, 2014, p. 210). "Anglo Nostalgia," a mindset prompting the British, especially those from England, to consistently reflect on their illustrious history as a coping mechanism for the present, often overlooks the changes that occurred in the present and typically

yearns for a complete return to the past (Campanella and Dassù, 2019, p. 18). In the British, nostalgia represents salvation and acts as a protector. For the countries, the rhythm of nostalgia is sustained by nationalism, reaching its climax with each crisis and challenge faced. The rhythm of nostalgia is embedded in a strong sense of nationalism and patriotism. No one will have no talgia for no reason, no nostalgia group that appears for no reason, nostalgia coexists with despair, British Nostalgia should keep British. Nostalgia's most robust 'fighting spirit' is emerges when the nature of the nation changes. In 19th century Europe, nostalgia was associated with the notion of the nation-state and related to the notion of nationalism (Niemeyer, 2014). Nationalism is different from religious domination, which allows for the rapid reorganisation of human relations in different contexts (Calhoun, 2016). Nationalism provides a mixture of good and bad that may help us understand what is true about a country and its people (Anderson, 2020). The British national identity stemmed from the historical solid underpinnings of the empire, where war shaped the state and the nation, and the national consciousness of sacrifice for the country was constantly reinforced by war (McCrone, 1997).

It is strong nationalism that drives a nation to periodic collective nostalgia. The British indulge in nostalgia voluntarily. Writer Kumar Krishan (2003) observes that the British have been unconsciously and unconcernedly sleeping in the embrace of history for centuries. The excess of history created in Britain would make it constantly available for sustained consumption. Historian Jeffrey Richards (2017), discussing the British, has spoken of the British being embroiled in nostalgia for an empire they barely remembered and barely know anything about.

The French political theorist Éric Zemmour has said that history is war. The reasons for war have been so influential, Stuart Hall (1996), a British cultural theorist, suggests that at the end of the war almost a quarter of the entire male population of the country had served or was serving in the military. In the 18th century, the victory of war created Britain, and the two World War created modern Britain, but these two World War also controlled British life between 1914 and 1945 and

weakened the fabric of the British state (McCrone, 1997). It was also from being the centre of European and global trade and influence networks in the 1940s, to the introduction of the welfare state, that Britain embarked on a search for identity after the Second World War (Campanella and Dassù, 2019). After the postwar period many soldiers returned to their jobs and families, with intense discomfort affecting community environments that were always ready to look back on the war. The prestige of history is the seed of the country's motivation for nostalgia or a sense of nationhood, and the concept of "imperialist nostalgia", as described by Renato Rosaldo (1993), refers to the mourning of something that one has destroyed through one's own actions. Whereas the old hegemony and imperial splendour gave the words 'British' or 'English' a taken-for-granted meaning, the rapid decline in status in the 1970s forced the British to face the question of 'who we are' (Bennett and Stratton, 2010). Journalist Andy Beckett argues that Declinism became part of the British state of mind in the mid-1970s, with encroaching authoritarianism and social breakdown leading the public to believe that this was the future direction of the country, a crisis that continues to influence memories of the 1970s (Worley, 2017). To reverse the passive impasse, the government needs to actively involve the public in addressing environmental issues (Wright, 2009). Such as in the 1970s, party member Tony Benn proposed The Labour Party's Alternative Economic Strategy (AES), exerted a particularly strong influence on the nation's cultural perception (Jobson, 2015). This includes nostalgia for the era when traditional British male industries were at the forefront of the British economy, the heroic struggles and solidarity of the traditional industrial working-class, and the historical symbols and figures of that era (Jobson, 2015).

British national identity is the source of strong nostalgia. Englishness carries a strong tinge of nostalgia for an inherently British way of being, and this nostalgia is spreading globally (Campanella and Dassù, 2019). Nationalism creates community as an imagined way in which ethnicity can always be automatically mapped into deep comradeship, no matter how brutal inequality and exploitation exist (Calhoun, 2016). As Stuart Hall (1996) points out, Britishness as a set of meanings has been represented by British national culture. The nation is not only a

political entity, but also a system of cultural representation that is capable of producing meaning. I recognise nostalgia's dual ability to inspire progress and innovation, and evoke a return to the stability of the past, such as bomb culture and Brexit. Brexit is the perfect expression of the postmodern nationalisation of nostalgia, where people are under stress and nostalgia is a low-cost ready-made stress catharsis. Like the youth groups that emerged in the postwar period, they inevitably emerged with something of the current state of society and the stress that youth have nowhere to vent. Times are changing, and the pressure on society is gradually shifting from cultural incompatibility to fear of the country's gradual retreat. Brexit and the emergence of youth organisations have equal significance at this level, as they are both expressions of nostalgia in the country's attempts to cope with the pressure. In both cases, nostalgia operates as a way for individuals and groups to respond to rapid changes and perceived losses, whether cultural, economic, or social. For Brexit supporters, nostalgia manifests as a desire to reclaim a past Britain, one they perceive as more stable and self-sufficient, and against fears of globalisation and diminishing national identity. Similarly, postwar youth organizations, like mods, rockers, and later punk movements, represented nostalgic and creative responses to societal discontent, giving young people outlets for frustration in a rapidly modernizing world.

Nostalgia as Both a Weapon and a Defensive Tool

The role of nationalism in maintaining the rhythm of nostalgia has been scrutinised, with particular emphasis on British nostalgia and its powerful "fighting spirit". In times of national change or crisis, nostalgia is seen as both a weapon and a tool of defence. Nostalgia can be described as a refuge of collective memory in times of chaos, as an adaptive psychological resource and as a means for States and Governments to adapt to existential threats. In historian David Edgerton (2018) book *The Rise and Fall of the British Nation: A Twentieth-Century History*, "History has played and continues to play a powerful role in British public life. The past is invoked as an explanation for the present, as a legitimation for particular policies, and as the place where the true essence of the nation is revealed (p. 42)."

Nostalgia can be understood as an idealized attachment to the past, and revisiting glorious moments from the past can invigorate a nation. Historian Emily Robinson (2012) notes that history plays a significant functional role in British politics, providing legitimacy, experience, and lessons for specific courses of action (cited in Jobson, 2015, p. 672). Wright Patrick (2009), drawing on Tony Wilden's terminology, uses "Imaginary Briton" to describe the trend among British people of publicly extolling a national identity, shifting political tensions into a unified perspective of a dominant culture expressed in the name of the nation. The rise of public nationalism reflects a crisis in social institutions. Political actors use nostalgic references as a means to achieve instrumental objectives, mobilizing the public's nostalgic memories to attain certain political goals (Strangleman, 1999).

The infatuation with past myths is influencing current politics. Politicians are adept at mobilising citizens by evoking their nostalgic sentiments, and indeed, such actions have saved or alleviated national crises. For instance, during the Victorian and Edwardian eras, the socio-economic upheavals caused by the Industrial Revolution led to a surge in public nostalgia. In the 1980s, Margaret Thatcher made "restoration" a core element of her political strategy (Heffer, 2017). Even former U.S. President Donald Trump, during his campaign, used the promise of restoring America's Cold War-era dominance as a rallying point, continuously pledging to bring back almost everything that was perceived to have been lost along the way (Brownstein, 2016). Prior to the formal Brexit, a typical sentiment among supporters was a longing to return to the tumultuous days of the British Empire's rule. Political scientist Albert Weale (2016) once remarked that Brexit was a victory for nostalgic democracy. While Brexit may appear as a political decision, it was in fact a culmination of collaborative efforts across various domains. Events such as royal weddings, the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, the 2012 Olympics, and the commemoration of Shakespeare's death all aided in rejuvenating national pride (Campanella and Dassù, 2019). These events helped create a climate in which the idea of reclaiming Britain's past grandeur became appealing. They were powerful, symbolic reminders of Britain's historical achievements and cultural legacy, which likely resonated with people who felt that Britain's identity was being diluted by

globalism. By celebrating Britain's unique history, traditions, and values, these events subtly reinforced a narrative that aligned with pro-Brexit sentiments, fostering a collective longing for a greater past and priming public support for Brexit as a means to take back control and restore national sovereignty

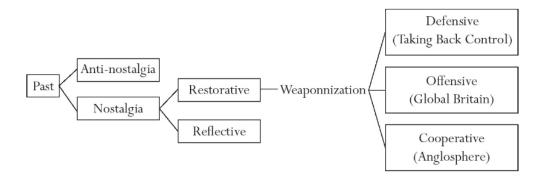


Figure 55. The Weaponization of Nostalgia and Brexit (Campanella and Dassù, 2019, p. 49) Brexit represents a microcosm of the era's nostalgic endeavours for the nation, capturing the social pressures caused by excessive immigration and the economic hardships faced by the native population. Nostalgia, akin to a guardian of the empire, consistently offers a new direction whenever the nation faces threats. Nostalgia is an intrinsic way of life for the British, defensively warding off adversaries while aggressively enhancing British global influence. In comparing the optimistic, forward-looking nostalgia of British youth culture in the 60s with the restorative, retrospective nostalgia of Brexit, I recognised the universal rhythm of nostalgia across different cultural and historical periods, serving as a psychological anchor during uncertain times. The rise of British youth culture in the 60s, epitomized by the ascension of the Beatles, embodied a progressive rhythm of nostalgia. Driven by postwar revival and optimism, the youth of this era challenged the status quo and created new forms of cultural expression. As harbingers of this movement, the Beatles became symbols of cultural advancement and innovation, their music and image representing a breakthrough from the past's simplicity to a future brimming with vitality and hope.

By 2016, Brexit infused nostalgia with a new momentum, transforming it into a force for reclaiming a lost sense of British identity and sovereignty amid rising

globalisations. Although nostalgia played a unifying role in both eras, the 1960s nostalgia was forward-looking, fueled by a spirit of liberation and discovery, embracing change and the unknown. In contrast, Brexit nostalgia is retrospective, driven by a desire to restore and protect the familiar, anchoring identity in the past. Despite their differences, both movements leverage nostalgia to foster unity and mobilization, whether towards an envisioned future or a revered past.

5.2.3 Realworld applications and the broader implications for cultural studies

Nostalgic rhythms are a universal language, each culture has its own history and traditions that it looks back on fondly, and each culture has a unique way of expressing nostalgia. The universality of nostalgic rhythms transcends the uniquely British experience and is reflected in every country and era. This phenomenon captures the essence of the human condition, reflecting our inherent desire to connect with our heritage and find meaning in our shared past. In the 1960s, nostalgic rhythms were filled with excitement and innovation, and British youth culture was at the height of its postwar optimism. The Beatles became the pioneers of the era, their music serving as a conduit for new cultural expression and reflecting the country's forward momentum. Their success lay not only in their music, but also in the fact that they embodied the spirit of the times, pushing the boundaries of the old world and ushering in a new era of freedom and creativity. They became a symbol of nostalgia, a collective yearning for the future. The 2016 Brexit referendum, which took place against a very different backdrop, demonstrated a very different rhythm of nostalgia. In the face of modern complexity, people seek to reclaim lost glory and certainty. This restorative nostalgia harks back to a time of perceived national unity and independence, with Brexit supporters invoking Britain's storied past to chart a course for the future. This form of nostalgia is more reflexive and is characterised by a desire to recover the past and provide comfort in globalisation's rapid changes and uncertainties. At this time nostalgia is symbolic of ideological implantation, used as a control mechanism by governments and markets. Although their emotional tone and

direction differ, a comparison of the two eras reveals the adaptability of nostalgic rhythms. The Beatles and Brexit are part of a larger pattern of nostalgia that continues to shape British collective consciousness and provide insight into the universal human condition. The rhythms of nostalgia are not confined to Britain, and they are a universal phenomenon that applies to all countries. Whether the reverence for the classics during the Renaissance or the nostalgic trends in fashion resurrects styles from decades past, nostalgic rhythms pulse through the cultural veins of societies worldwide. The rhythm of nostalgia has become a cultural and psychological constant that transcends geographical and temporal boundaries. Whether it is the yearning for the "good old days" of the postwar era in the United States or the reverence for ancient traditions in Eastern societies, nostalgia is everywhere. It acts as a stabilising force in times of rapid change, providing comfort and continuity.

This study has also considered the application of memory rhythms in various contexts, where nostalgia emerges as an interdisciplinary concept that stimulates creativity and imagination in Western sociology, philosophy, and literature. The phenomenon of nostalgia is not limited to revisiting the past; it is also a reinterpretation of the past, with areas such as music, film and fashion following the underlying temporal patterns of nostalgic rhythms. It is commodified in the consumer market as well as ritualised in cultural branding. In fashion, styles and trends from previous decades reemerge and are recontextualised for contemporary audiences. The bell-bottom trousers of the 1970s, the neon colours of the 1980s or the grunge aesthetic of the 1990s all return in cycles, each wave harmonising with the nostalgia of those who lived through them and appealing to those who did not. The resurgence of vinyl records and retro clothing, the revival of retro video games or the reboot of classic films and TV programmes are all examples of how nostalgia can work at pace. These cultural artefacts are no longer just objects or entertainment, and they are carriers of collective memory, transporting us back to a different time and place, even if they are consumed in the present. In contemporary society, the rhythm of nostalgia plays a pivotal role in shaping consumer behaviour and marketing strategies. Brands and advertisers use

nostalgia to create a sense of authenticity and emotional connection with their audiences. The exploitation of nostalgia is not random, but regular, targeting specific generations, referring to their formative years and appealing to a general desire for simpler, more familiar times. This interplay between the old and the new is a critical aspect of the nostalgic rhythm, demonstrating the role of nostalgia as a bridge between different eras and varied experiences.

Nostalgia can be seen in the cyclical fashion trends that bring past eras into the contemporary wardrobe, in the revival of vintage film aesthetics that transport viewers to bygone eras, or in the resurgence of classic literature that connects generations. Each of these examples is a beat in the rhythm of nostalgia, and these beats that share the common emotional resonance of humanity have the unique ability to evoke and instigate rhythms that express nostalgia. It is a rhythm of gradual strength and weakness, like the ebb and flow of the ocean tide. It is present in the way societies revive and celebrate traditions, in the way communities come together during festivals to reminisce about the past, and in the way, nations reflect on history on major anniversaries. This rhythm foreshadows both the past and the future, encapsulating the essence of both.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This research began out of curiosity about the continuation of British culture and exploring the formation and continuation of Britain in terms of cultural identification. Rooted in a desire to understand how societies remember, mythologise, and commodify their past, the research set out to interrogate nostalgia not as a singular or static emotion, but as a complex structure that oscillates across time, memory, and affective experience. At the beginning of the research, it was driven by broader cultural concerns: how nostalgia constructs continuity and meaning in modern society when faced with rapid social change, technological updates and historical ruptures. Specifically, as a member of a non-British cultural background, I observed the value of nostalgia within British culture. When I realised that nostalgia is an important clue to British cultural identity, I saw that nostalgia appears in every aspect of human culture, but people do not particularly emphasise its role. This prompted me to explore how nostalgia functions as a cultural resource, psychological support, and national reliance. The Beatles became an extremely inspiring case study, not only because of their musical influence, but also their enduring vitality in cultural memory, tourism infrastructure, and urban regeneration strategies. Their lasting influence made it possible to explore in depth how nostalgia is intertwined with the processes of memory, emotional investment, and symbolic renewal.

The study's core contribution is to develop the concept of the "rhythm of nostalgia", a theoretical framework that captures the recurring, patterned ways in which the past is affectively reengaged and culturally reanimated. To achieve this aim, the thesis was guided by five interrelated research questions. The first question examined how the concept of nostalgia has evolved in contemporary cultural theory, especially in relation to affect, temporality, and memory in late capitalist societies. In the Literature Review Chapter, I examine the transformation of nostalgia within postmodern narratives. Historically, nostalgia has arisen as a disease and is far from being merely sentimental in the contemporary understanding of the term. Over time, nostalgia gradually shed its pathological

connotations and evolved into a complex emotional state. These shifts signalled a move away from seeing nostalgia as merely a medical affliction and towards understanding it as a fundamentally human experience. Referring to Freud's perspective that the unconscious mind harbours our deepest desires and memories, with nostalgia serving as a bridge to our primal past (cited in Nuttall, 1968, p. 110). Lacan's (1977) theory further explores this, interpreting the death drive as a nostalgic longing, with the separation from the mother leaving a lasting psychological imprint. As a result, nostalgia is intertwined with our personal and collective consciousness, and the messages it conveys are often unspoken but profoundly influential.

In postmodern discussions of nostalgia, it has gained new dimensions, reflecting this era's focus on simulation and mimicry. Opinions on nostalgia are divided: some view it as a regressive force hindering progress, a selective re-enactment of the past that may serve as an escape from contemporary complexity. Others see it as a constructive factor promoting emotional well-being, offering a means to reconstruct identity and history. This debate extends to the role of nostalgia in society. In my research, the relationship between nostalgia and evolution resembles our desires, spiritual and psychological growth processes. Postmodern nostalgia experiences often use technology and consumer culture as mediators, which can both diminish and reinforce longing for the past. This creates a contradictory situation where nostalgia is both a commodity and a coping mechanism, a way to regain a sense of authenticity in an increasingly simulated world. The postmodern turn in nostalgia also prompts a reconsideration of its impact on collective memory and historical construction.

The second research question examined how a literature-based methodology approach could serve as a rigorous methodological strategy for analysing the interplay between nostalgia, cultural memory, and mediated representations.

Rather than relying on fieldwork, this thesis adopted a qualitative, interdisciplinary methodology that draws from cultural theory, media analysis, and historical literature. Building on the Literature Review Chapter, I systematically collected and

critically read published literature and cultural texts related to the case study to construct new theoretical interpretations. I focus on a single but information-rich case study: The Beatles in Liverpool, tracing how the Beatles, not only as a pop music group rooted in the 1960s, but also as a multi-layered cultural text, have continuously returned, re-emerged and been reinterpreted over the decades. Examining the Beatles as a cultural and historical entity through the perspective of nostalgia is not only an act of remembrance, but also a critical exploration of their cross-generational influence. The Beatles phenomenon often gets analysed in musicology and cultural studies, but my research goes beyond traditional analysis and puts the Beatles in the broader context of nostalgia theory. This perspective shows how the Beatles symbolise a bygone era characterised by innovation, rebellion and change in many ways. It is not just their music that evokes nostalgia, but also the memories, emotions and historical significance associated with their existence. The methodological contribution of this thesis is that it can demonstrate that nostalgia is analysed through comprehensive reading symbolic forms, emotional structures, and cultural narratives without the need to facilitate direct empirical observation.

The third and fourth questions addressed the socio-historical conditions of postwar Britain and the ways nostalgia has been materialised in Liverpool's urban landscape, tourism infrastructure, fan practices, and media narratives. Drawing on a case study approach, the thesis analysed how the Beatles' cultural afterlife became intertwined with the city's identity and economic repositioning.

Postwar Britain underwent significant social change and cultural transformation, with rapid modernisation and the end of the empire giving rise to complex feelings of nostalgia. Britain transitioned from a heavy industrial to a consumer-oriented economy, with young people redefining the labour market, leisure and consumption. During this period, teenagers became a unique economic and cultural force, challenging and reshaping social norms with their hedonistic lifestyle and enthusiastic embrace of popular culture. Sociocultural shifts redefined gender roles, youth expression, and class structures, laying the

groundwork for the acceptance of the Beatles, whose appeal was a comfort to a nation nostalgic for a glorious and simpler time. The Beatles' rise coincided with the erosion of British culture by Americanisation, and they played a key role in the British invasion of American music, reversing the flow of cultural influence and exporting a unique British voice and identity that resonated internationally. Their influence extended beyond music into fashion, lifestyle, and political engagement, fostering two-way cultural exchange and reshaping British and American societies. The Beatles' success was a phenomenon that fulfilled the collective desire for transformation during a period of economic recovery and shifting social norms. When the Beatles emerged, Britain was grappling with its post-imperial identity, with people yearning to reclaim national pride and cultural status. It was also a moment when people were reinterpreting the past through the perspective of contemporary reality. Meanwhile, young people, driven by economic growth and liberalisation, were seeking new forms of expression and identity. The Beatles provided an avenue for this collective longing, evoking Britain's legendary past while symbolising its modern aspirations.

The youth culture, amplified by media and market forces, is pivotal to understanding the evolution of a consumer society, and the Beatles, as icons of cultural resurgence, occupy a dual role in the nostalgia economy as both subjects and objects of consumption. Nostalgia transformed from a personal, retrospective emotion into a complex cultural force that drives consumer behaviour and identity formation within the ever-changing British social fabric. The Beatles, imbued with this sense of nostalgia, became a touchstone for the nostalgia-driven market. From the restructuring of postwar British society to the global celebration of the Beatles' tradition, this journey attests to the transformative power of nostalgia. The crises of the 1970s, with their impact on postwar life, shaped people's connections with the Beatles. It underscores how a society remains in dialogue with its past, not just out of respect, but as a means of continual cultural renewal.

This wave of Beatles nostalgia has played a key role in shaping Liverpool's contemporary branding. I use the hauntology perspective to approach the legacy

of the Beatles. For Liverpool, the Beatles are both a memory and a constant reality. Liverpool has created a nostalgic brand that transcends mere historical memory by integrating the ghost of the Beatles into the city. It transforms the Beatles' legacy into an active, vibrant element of the city's cultural and economic landscape. The city allows the band to continue to influence and inspire, ensuring that the Beatles' influence is reflected not only in memory but also in the vitality of the city itself. By building its brand around the Beatles, Liverpool has successfully preserved its heritage while promoting economic growth and urban development.

I show how nostalgia operates not simply as an emotional response to the past, but as a strategic cultural and economic tool that cities like Liverpool actively deploy. Through commemorative infrastructure (such as museums, statues, heritage trails, and the annual International Beatleweek Festival), Liverpool reactivates the Beatles' legacy as a living, productive force. From a hauntological perspective, the Beatles are not only a memory for fans, but a spectral presence that continues to shape the urban imaginary and guide the city's global cultural identity. This spectrality allows Liverpool to position itself as both historically rich and perpetually relevant, sustaining a cultural economy rooted in memory while remaining open to reinvention.

The fifth question, which is also the thesis's core contribution focused on theorising the "rhythm of nostalgia" itself, conceptualising it as a recursive and mise-en-abyme like process that both reproduces and reconfigures cultural meanings across generations. Through the Literature-Based Case Study, I have developed a new conceptual theme on nostalgia: the "rhythm of nostalgia", revealing the powerful and enduring patterns of nostalgia in society. I borrow the classic Mise-en-abyme concept from visual art and literature, using its structural form to analogise the rhythm of nostalgia: nostalgia extends from the present to a point in the past but also resides in the future, all contained within an infinite loop. The phenomenon of the rhythm of nostalgia is an invisible yet tangible pattern that punctuates and amplifies our contact with the past. This rhythm is not a simple return to a fixed moment in history, but a regular process that allows memories,

identities and emotions to flow across time. Through the narrative of the Beatles, we observe the effect of this rhythm, which pulsates through popular culture, fashion and socio-political movements. The rhythm of nostalgia changes with our emotions and the state of the world; it is a force that propels us beyond the present reality. The contradictory nature of nostalgia is both an allure and a longing, driving us toward an unattainable fulfilment. When I compare the function of the rhythm of nostalgia to the mise-en-abyme structure, I point out the recursive nature of nostalgia in cultural consumption and memory. Each iteration of this recursive nature adds to the depth of our collective memory. The legacy of the Beatles is the best example of this. Their music and image are constantly being reinterpreted by new generations, adding new connotations to cultural narratives and continuing the rhythm of nostalgia.

The rhythm of nostalgia ensures that each return to the past is imbued with reflection on its previous manifestations, enriched and transformed by the passage of time and societal evolution. The philosophical foundations of nostalgia are embedded within the structures of time, memory, and identity, with the past being repackaged and reintroduced into the cultural mainstream, each time with new interpretations and meanings. Nostalgia is not merely a longing for a place, but fundamentally a longing for different times. The phenomenon of nostalgia is not limited to revisiting the past; it is also a reinterpretation of the past. It accumulates over time and space, hinting at deeper meanings.

Beyond its theoretical intervention, the concept of the "rhythm of nostalgia" offers valuable insights into the broader functioning of cultural industries. In an era defined by digital reproduction, heritage branding, and emotional consumption, nostalgia has become a key mechanism through which cultural products acquire value. This thesis shows that affective attachments to the past are not simply commodified but are also mobilised to construct local identities, stimulate tourism economies, and negotiate social trauma. The case of the Beatles in Liverpool illustrates how a city can strategically deploy nostalgia to rebrand itself as both a site of memory and innovation, a place where the ghosts of the past

coexist with aspirations for the future. This has significant implications for other post-industrial cities seeking cultural regeneration through heritage industries.

Beyond the specific case of the Beatles, I have also reflected on how the rhythm of memory and nostalgia manifests across diverse cultural contexts. Nostalgia, as an interdisciplinary construct, intersects with Western sociology, philosophy, and literature, serving not only as a response to temporal dislocation but also as a stimulus for creativity and imagination. Within cultural industries such as music, film, and fashion, the rhythm of nostalgia structures aesthetic cycles of revival and reinvention. These industries do not simply replicate past forms, but rather they draw upon nostalgic affect to create hybrid products that resonate across generations. These cultural and artistic works are no longer just objects or entertainment projects; they are the carriers of collective memory that bring us back to different times and places. The rhythm of nostalgia acts as both a temporal mechanism and an affective logic.

I have comprehensively examined the multifaceted nature of the Beatles phenomenon and its interrelationship with the intricate theory of nostalgia within the context of nostalgia theory, innovatively uncovering the rhythms of nostalgia and articulating its necessity. It is a positive thing and a way to open up avenues of future research and apply to different cultures. While endeavouring to provide comprehensive insights, this thesis acknowledges its inherent limitations. The main limitation of this study is the subjectivity inherent in analysing nostalgia. The personal nature of nostalgia means that its research relies heavily on individual and collective interpretations, which cultural, social, and personal biases can influence. Although the Beatles phenomenon was widespread, it is also a single perspective for exploring broader nostalgia theory, and is limited by the cultural and historical context of the Beatles era. This focus may inadvertently overlook other cultural phenomena that may provide different or complementary perspectives on nostalgia. Secondly, although the scope of research is broad, it is also limited by the cultural and period context of the Beatles era. This limitation

comes from the accessibility of resources and the historical concentration of Beatles-related scholarship.

Recognising these limitations provides more possibilities for future research. Future research could explore the manifestations of the rhythm of nostalgia in non-Western or cross-cultural contexts. Comparative studies of other global music idols may further reveal the universality and cultural specificity of the rhythm of nostalgia. The incorporation of emerging technologies provides another area of innovation. Virtual reality and augmented reality offer new modes of experiencing and studying nostalgia. The emergence of artificial intelligence provides transformative prospects for nostalgia research. Artificial intelligence (AI) has enormous potential to revolutionise how we study cultural phenomena such as the Beatles' legacy. The capacity of AI for processing and analysing data from different cultures and languages opens up opportunities for comparative studies of global nostalgia patterns. It offers innovative ways to analyse and explain the complex interplay between emotions, memories and cultural artefacts. Machine learning algorithms can analyse massive datasets of music, images, literature and fan testimonials to identify patterns of Beatles influence that are undetectable to human researchers. Future research could use AI to parse huge datasets comprising music, literature, film and social media content. Through techniques such as machine learning and natural language processing, AI can identify patterns and trends in the expression and reception of nostalgia that may be imperceptible to human analysis. Al-driven sentiment analysis can quantify the emotional resonance of nostalgia across cultures and periods, providing a nuanced map of nostalgic rhythms. This approach quantifies both the emotional resonance and cultural impact of nostalgia in diverse contexts, leading to a more objective understanding of the impact of nostalgia.

In addition, AI can simulate the spread of nostalgia trends, predict their resurgence, and provide information for cultural institutions to plan exhibitions or retrospectives. It will become possible to plan personalised nostalgic experiences for individuals or groups. By analysing individual or collective preferences, AI can

customise experiences that resonate on an individual or collective level, thereby deepening our understanding of subjective nostalgia. This can extend to personalised virtual or augmented reality experiences that immerse individuals in recreated or reimagined nostalgic environments.

These limitations do not affect the contribution of this study, but rather point the way for further academic research. I invite future researchers to expand the dialogue, innovate in methodology, and explore the vast cultural space of nostalgia with new perspectives and tools. With the continuous renewal of social culture, our understanding of nostalgia in its context will also continue to evolve, keeping this field of study as vibrant and dynamic as the phenomenon it seeks to understand.

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