TEACHING "THE HISTORY OF ROCK 'N' ROLL"

William Graebner
State University of New York
College at Fredonia

"The History of Rock 'n' Roll" was created in 1980 at the State University College at Fredonia, New York, a branch of the State University of New York with a full-time enrollment of about 5,000 students. The offering was made with several goals in mind. First, the course was designed to increase sagging History Department enrollments--a decade-long problem exacerbated in recent years by the growth of vocational programs in the college curriculum. In this respect, the course has been a great success. Taught once a year in the spring semester, it draws between 175 and 225 students.[1] Second, I had some hope that the course would serve as a feeder into other history courses--that students, once introduced to the discipline, would sample the department's other offerings. My sense is that students have not made the move from rock 'n' roll to the Renaissance; they come for the "special" and turn up their noses at the rest of the menu. Third, I anticipated that students would come away from "The History of Rock 'n' Roll" with a new appreciation of the links between popular and general culture and between something they value--rock 'n' roll--and American history. Some students clearly emerge from the course with a sense of wonder at the complex function of a music they had heretofore taken for entertainment; others--perhaps a majority--remain just fans of this group or that, or at best antiquarians.

Once the students are in the classroom, I take the opportunity to introduce them to history. I do this two ways. First, I require them to learn the contents of a basic U.S. since 1945 textbook, even though certain portions have no obvious or necessary relationship to rock music.[2] Second, I try to demonstrate, through my lectures, how useful and interesting history can be in understanding and interpreting that musical world of theirs. Although I steer clear of the kind of detail that students so much appreciate (e.g., How many ex-Byrds played in the Flying Burrito Brothers?), a small portion of the course is narrowly music history: the origins of rock 'n' roll in blues, rhythm and blues, and country and western. Some other classes are essentially descriptive. In these descriptive lectures I try to create a rich setting for the music of the 1960s drug culture, or for a song about Kent State or the 1967 Detroit riots. Another series of classes suggests more complex relationships between culture and music--between, for example, the folk-rock story-ballads of Johnny Horton and President John Kennedy's "New Frontier"; between the pathos of Bruce Springsteen and the malaise of the 1970s; between the pre-rock pop music of the early 1950s and the emergence of Senator Joseph McCarthy. In two other classes, I use moments in the history of rock music--Dylan's conversion to electricity in 1965 and the confrontation between The Who's Peter Townshend and Abby Hoffman on the stage at Woodstock in 1969--to construct metaphors for the transition from one era to another. Although I sometimes deal with topics--death, dancing, and school are examples from the syllabus--this approach can all too easily produce classes that are ahistorical.[3]

Large enrollments place certain constraints on teaching methods. Discussion becomes difficult, and I seldom encourage it. Because examinations must be graded in some reasonable period of time (and without a teaching assistant), essays must be avoided. I give three examinations, each with about sixty multiple choice questions.

An earlier version of this paper was presented at the annual meeting of the Organization of American Historians, Cincinnati, Ohio, April 7, 1983.
© 1983 William Graebner. All rights reserved.

The subject matter, too, has an influence on teaching methods. Students expect to hear plenty of music, and I play it for them--up to 40 minutes worth in a one hour and 20 minute class.[4] Because it takes time to set up and take down the equipment and to develop topics thoroughly, I prefer to teach the course only twice a week rather than three times. Moreover, to change my course to a MWF sequence would require reconstructing every class and re-recording every tape.

The equipment involved is not especially complex or expensive. In class, I use a standard portable, stereo, reel-to-reel tape recorder/deck with built-in amplifier. My speakers are "bookshelf" size (specifically, AR4s), and they are easily plugged into jacks on the recorder. More elaborate systems would certainly enhance audio quality, but my students have seldom expressed dissatisfaction. All the material for each class is recorded in stereo on one side of a 7" tape.

Assembling a lecture is a time-consuming but fairly simple process. I begin with some basic ideas, locate music to illustrate what I can, and then write the lecture, being careful to emphasize what can be demonstrated in audio. When I have completed the writing process, I go back through the lecture and record the audio in sequence.

I came to this course with a substantial personal commitment to rock music. Some form of rock has always been "my" music. On the other hand, I have never been much interested in lyrics, nor much of a concert goer, and when I began to think about putting together this course, I had no knowledge of blues, rhythm and blues, soul, heavy metal, and some other genres. In short, although I was no novice, I knew almost nothing that I could easily use in the classroom, and there were substantial gaps in my knowledge of the music.

In assembling materials for the course, I listened to hours of rock music and employed two other methods. First, I relied heavily on secondary literature. Several studies proved especially important. Carl Belz's _The Story of Rock_ was indispensable, and Charlie Gillett's _The Sound of the City_, Greil Marcus's _Mystery Train_, Robert Christgau's _Any Old Way You Choose It_, R. Serge Denisoff's _Sing a Song of Social Significance_, Jonathan Eisen's _The Age of Rock_, and Simon Frith's _Sound Effects: Youth, Leisure, and the Politics of Rock 'n' Roll_, nearly so.[5] I fashioned one class largely out of Richard Aquila's essay on images of the West in rock music, and half of another out of Denisoff's essay on images of dying in rock music.[6] Much of the remainder of the course was produced by combining a knowledge of the history of the United States since 1945 with what I knew about the history of rock music. For example, I read John W. Jeffries's article, "The 'Quest for National Purpose' of 1960," with the intent to demonstrate his thesis using rock music.[7] Working from the other direction, I listened to many songs about school and schooling, hoping to find music I could plug into the history of public education.

The need to demonstrate almost everything _in music_ cannot be overestimated. I had either to let what I knew about the music determine the content of my lectures, or find music that said what I wanted to say. I believed for a while that the way to do the latter was to haunt the used record stores and rummage through the bins at the Goodwill. Now and then I used the collection at the college's radio station. But in general, the most valuable source of recordings was a large collection of "oldies" available in a record store in Buffalo. This would be a difficult course to develop in an area isolated from this or some similar resource.

I have presented the substance of the course more or less in the order in which my classes receive it--all in capsule form, of course, and emphasizing some things more than others.

The Postwar Era, 1945-1957

Following an introductory lecture and musical survey of the terrain covered by the course, I set the stage for the emergence of rock 'n' roll in the mid-1950s. I begin by describing the popular music of the white middle class in the late 1940s and early 1950s, arguing that the emphasis in this music on melody, simple lyrics, and waltz tempos reflects an era known for its piety, old-fashioned patriotism, and polarized and simplistic views of international relations.[8] This was a generation that found comfort in 1950 in Patti Page's "Mockin' Bird Hill."[9] And it was the same generation that felt safer or somehow vindicated for executing Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. I tell the class about the Rosenbergs, and I play more examples of the genre, including Sammy Kaye, "In the Mission at St. Augustine" (1953)--to emphasize religion--and the McGuire Sisters, "Sincerely" (1954).[10] Using the sound track from the recent film "Atomic Cafe," one can fashion an interesting and entertaining class on the atomic bomb and nuclear energy. For example, "Red's Dream," by Louisiana Red, describes a fantasy compounded of the United Nations and rhythm and blues.[11]

Against this background of the music of the McCarthy era, rock 'n' roll can easily seem a revolutionary intrusion.[12] Certainly most of today's students carry around this mythology of rock music as a potent symbol of generational rebellion. Several classes deal with this mythology.[13] First, I bring into question a specific myth, related to the larger one: the myth that there was a "moment" at which rock 'n' roll emerged as an identifiable music. I accomplish this by beginning with one of the songs often credited with being the "first"--"Rock Around the Clock," by Bill Haley and the Comets (1955). I then move backward, through Haley's "Rock the Joint" (1951) and Wynonie Harris's "Good Rockin' Tonight" (1948) to "Roll 'Em Pete," a 1938 performance by Joe Turner and Pete Johnson that no one can hear without thinking of Fats Domino.[14]

At this point, students understand that rock 'n' roll did not emerge full blown in the mid-1950s, and they may even be intrigued by the role of black musical styles in shaping the music. I feed this new curiosity with two classes on the black roots of rock music. The first, on the blues, emphasizes both the structure of the music and how it changed in the 1920s and 1930s as those who played it migrated from the rural South to the cities of the industrial North.[15] In the second class, on rhythm and blues, I describe President Harry Truman's racial politics and suggest that the gospel-influenced rhythm and blues of this period reflected the willingness of most blacks to leave race relations to the chief executive while retreating to the comfort of their churches.[16] To illustrate this point I play The Orioles, "Crying in the Chapel" (1953).[17]

The second half of the class on rhythm and blues has another lesson, one that begins to shed some light on the relationship between black and white music in the 1950s. I begin with Hank Ballard and the Midnighters and a 1954 rhythm and blues hit called "Work with Me, Annie." Five months later, Ballard informed us of the consequences of working with Annie in "Annie Had a Baby" (1954).[18] The lyrics of rhythm and blues were, obviously, suggestive, and especially so for a growing audience of whites--mostly working-class teenagers in big cities--who found the music available on the radio.[19]

At this point, students should sense that no matter how similar in melody, structure, or rhythm, this was not rock 'n' roll as they know it. Joe

Turner's version of "Shake, Rattle and Roll" (1954) had a different lyric from the Bill Haley version of the same years.[20] Turner's was rhythm and blues; Haley's rock 'n' roll. I use these two versions to begin the next class, and I follow with other examples of white artists recording "covers" of rhythm and blues tunes.[21] That established, what does one make of it? That question has no single or obvious answer. I argue that unlike rhythm and blues, which had some of the grass-roots qualities of a folk music, rock and roll was a form of cultural imperialism, in which white, middle-class, homogenized suburban America, having lost touch with anything like cultural roots, sought a kind of vicarious regeneration through the adoption of more organic black musical forms.[22] But at first rhythm and blues was too earthy and, perhaps, too dangerous for the white middle class. And so it was tamed, sanitized, and sung by a white man wearing white bucks.[23]

The next class establishes Elvis Presley as a participant in this process of homogenization but also as its opponent. To set the stage for Presley, I describe the contents of two documents: the Kinsey Report on sexuality, published in 1948 and 1953; and Norman Mailer's 1957 essay, "The White Negro."[24] The Report material is designed to present the <u>reality</u> of a sexually active teenage population. Against that reality, I use advice manuals to establish the moralistic and proscriptive tenor of the 1950s.[25] Presley's sexuality was in tune with the reality of teenage sexual activity (in the case of working-class youth) and sexual desires (in the case of the middle class).

Mailer's essay suggests that white Americans, seeking the courage of rebellion, found a model in the Negro who, because he "could rarely afford the sophisticated inhibitions of civilization," "kept for his survival the art of the primitive."[26] Sam Phillips of Sun Records, who discovered Presley, understood the singer's relationship to black culture and, by implication, the need of whites for a transfusion of black sexual energy.[27] The other side of the Presley story is that Presley's sexuality was always tempered by the singer's regular output of devotional songs (such as "Peace in the Valley" [1957])[28] and by his outward acceptance of constituted authority (illustrated by an excerpt from Presley's interview on going into the Army on September 22, 1958).[29]

The next two classes pick up three themes found in the rock 'n' roll of the mid- and late-1950s: death, dancing, and school. On the subject of death, I rely largely on Denisoff's essay, "Death Songs and Teenage Roles."[30] I shall not repeat Denisoff's interesting if somewhat speculative interpretation of songs such as Jody Reynolds's "Endless Sleep" (1958) and Mark Dinning's "Teen Angel" (1960).[31]

Using A.B. Hollingshead's <u>Elmstown's Youth</u> (1949),[32] I examine dancing as an erotic activity brought under community control. At some point between the wars, dancing was apparently moved into the school--where, I hypothesize, it could be observed and chaperoned. One early result was the formal dance, the prom, described by Marty Robbins in "White Sport Coat" (1957).[33] Another consequence was the "hop," the focus of Danny and the Juniors in "At the Hop" (1957).[34] Both songs are evidence of subtle community and parental social control, exercised through the school.

The class on school that completes the first unit in the course is one of the most successful. It begins with a 15 minute presentation--a virtual acting out--of a crucial scene from Evan Hunter's <u>The Blackboard Jungle</u> (1953),[35] in which students at the North Manual Trades High School, fed up with the efforts of one teacher to "reach" them by playing <u>his</u> music (Harry James, Bunny Berrigan, and Artie Shaw), smash the teacher's collection of

78 rpm records. One explanation is that these students find little of relevance in the music of a previous generation. But this explanation--of a "generation gap"--obscures a deeper division between these students and their teacher--the reality of class.[36] A second explanation, therefore, is that North Manual Trades High School is a custodial institution, a place for occupying functionless working-class youth who might otherwise be on the streets or in the unemployment lines. To emphasize the school as a mechanism of social control, I show about 30 minutes of Frederick Wiseman's 1968 film, "High School." Finally, I play a half dozen songs that deal with these themes. These include Chuck Berry's "Almost Grown" (1959),[37] in which the singer is the perfect product of the custodial high school.

From Sputnik to the Kennedy Assassination, 1957-1963

My explication of the years between Sputnik and the Kennedy assassination is grounded in Jeffries's essay on national purpose. Following Jeffries, I go back to Henry Luce's famous 1941 editorial, "The American Century," and then demonstrate just how brief that "American Century" proved to be. With a serious recession and the launch of Sputnik, 1957 was an especially difficult year. Americans began to doubt their military and economic superiority and to mumble aloud about "national purpose."[38]

One response was a new and intense interest in morality. This moralism was reflected in congressional investigations into the rigging of television quiz shows, labor racketeering, price-fixing in the electrical industry and--to get to rock 'n' roll--payola (i.e., payoffs to disc jockeys to promote and play particular records).[39]

A second response to the end of the "American Century" was the search for a new music that would announce a sense of recaptured moral purpose. That music would have to be entirely "authentic." The result was the folk revival--clean white folks in pressed shirts, like The Kingston Trio, or groups with unimpeachable integrity, like Peter, Paul and Mary. "The Truth is on the record," proclaimed the liner notes for their first album in 1962. "Honesty if back. Tell your neighbor."[40]

Americans had a third response to the crisis of the late 1950s. They elected the personification of purpose, John Kennedy.[41] Moreover, Kennedy offered an imagery for this sense of purpose: the imagery of the "frontier," a place where it was hard to be flabby, difficult to be affluent, and impossible to be complacent or aimless.[42] In class, I describe how, in the 19th century, Americans' belief in the superiority of the frontiersman generated a whole mythology around the Battle of New Orleans. And I play the music of Johnny Horton ("The Battle of New Orleans" [1959]).[43]

A forthcoming text in American history introduces the last years of the 1950s as "the decline and fall of practically everything," and there is general agreement that the heyday of Bobby Rydell, Connie Francis, and Fabian was a period of artistic weakness for rock music. Was this weakness related to the new hunger for national purpose, high morality, and authenticity? Perhaps. One element of the quest for national purpose was a nostalgia for an earlier era of American dominance--an era identified, in the public mind, with the simpler music of the pre-rock era. The popular rock 'n' roll of the late 1950s recaptured that simplicity.[44]

The Age of Expectations: the 1960s

For me the 1960s is the least satisfying section of the course. This is partly because I have thus far relied on canned material for treatment of

the Vietnam War,[45] and canned material--no matter how superb in audio or video--almost always lacks an analytical edge. But this is a comparatively minor problem. The 1960s are difficult because the central musical figures of the decade--Bob Dylan, the Beatles, and the Rolling Stones--are difficult to package neatly.

Dylan was a poet,[46] and I have not had the patience to read his poetry. Instead, I bear in on Dylan's odyssey from folk music to rock,[47] a journey captured by Dylan's use of an electric guitar at the Newport Folk Festival on July 25, 1965. That Newport audience heard Dylan metaphorically announce his departure from the folk movement in "Maggie's Farm" (1965).[48] This movement to electricity foreshadows, or corresponds with, the changing tone of the decade, including the growing seriousness of the war in Vietnam.[49]

My presentation of the Beatles has two basic ingredients. First, I interpret the group as a reflection of political and social conditions peculiar to 1964, the year they became popular in the United States. It is now a rock music cliché--but one worth repeating--to suggest that the Beatles provided a release from the traumatic assassination of November 1963. More demonstrable, I think, is that the Beatles were a rallying point for those Americans who, with the assassination, gave up their "liberal" illusions. Unlike Kennedy, whose purposefulness stood for those illusions, the Beatles consistently refused to take themselves entirely seriously; they were always, at least in part, pleasure-seeking innocents. In 1967, they announced that they were not really famous Beatles at all, but old-time music hall entertainers, just passing the time; they were "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band."[50]

I use the Beatles and the Rolling Stones to describe the 1950s mythology of the classless, affluent society[51] and the discovery, in the early 1960s, that America not only had a working class but poor people. Just as Michael Harrington had in 1962 proclaimed the existence of the "other" America,[52] so did the Stones flaunt the idea of an English working class and mock the mythology of success in songs like "Factory Girl" (1968).[53] Whether the Stones were legitimate spokesmen for the working class, or mere imposters, was a question asked obliquely by the Hell's Angels at the Altamont Concert in 1969.[54]

Another way to examine the subject of class is through the British Mod phenomenon of the early and mid-1960s. Like the Teddy Boys of the 1950s and the Skinheads of the 1970s, the Mods were mostly working-class males locked into dead-end jobs. Unable to affect the mode of production, they focused their lives on the scooters, clothing, and music of the mode of consumption. Unable to change their work, they invested enormous energy in leisure. Unable to gain respect from the real world, they created a Mod world, complete with hierarchies and statuses. There were followers and leaders--that is, "tickets" and "faces," as shown in a song by the High Numbers, "I'm the Face" (1964).[55]

The civil rights movement of the 1960s allows the use of two topical songs of some importance, both by white artists. Janis Ian's "Society's Child" (1967)[56] suggests that even in the 1960s interracial dating and marriage remained fraught with difficulty. Gordon Lightfoot's "Black Day in July" (1967)[57] captures some of the fury of the Detroit race riot of summer 1967.[58] Another angle worth developing is that Motown--as a "sound" and as a record company--emerged from the depression of 1957 in Detroit and reflects the social and work milieu of the Motor City's black working class.[59]

Still, the burden of any interpretation of 1960s soul music must be on establishing a relationship between the music and a spectrum of civil rights philosophies available in the decade, from Martin Luther King, Jr.'s non-violent, militant integrationism to Malcolm X's separatism.[60] The essential conservatism of soul music can be demonstrated in more than one way. The continued influence of gospel music in the Harlem Sound of Wilson Pickett suggests that Pickett had not rejected King's religion-based approach to reform.[61] The Motown Sound, on the other hand, was not gospel-based. It was repetitive, stiff, and regimented.[62] Perhaps the most interesting characteristic of Motown is that it retained these qualities throughout the 1960s. While the Beatles changed and rock blossomed in the late 1960s, soul barely moved off center. It may be, then, that Motown reflects a resistance to change on the part of its consuming public--a resistance that might be read as a rejection of the radical side of the civil rights movement. On the other hand, soul music could also be interpreted as a form of separatism--as a black recapturing of the rhythm and blues that had been appropriated by white culture in the 1950s. Having found a musical style that whites could not easily colonize, blacks clung to it.

A second class on the black revolt deals with the "white backlash" of the 1960s and early 1970s, a backlash that carried Richard Nixon to the presidency in 1968 under the banners of "law and order" and "crime in the streets." I trace that backlash in some detail. But most of the class is taken up in describing the racist fantasies of Charles Manson. I argue that Manson's fantasies were a peculiarly psychotic version of what many Americans were feeling. Manson was fixated on the Beatles' white album (The Beatles); the substance of the class is an exploration of how Manson interpreted that music.[63]

Two classes treat the white counter-cultures of the 1960s. The first describes the drug culture, the enthusiasm for Eastern religions, the flight to Haight-Ashbury, and the collapse of the more romantic aspects of the counter-cultural revolution under the impact of events in 1968.[64] The music follows naturally: Jefferson Airplane, "White Rabbit" (1967); Country Joe and the Fish, "Marijuana" (1968); and "In-a-gadda-da-vida," from Iron Butterfly in 1968.[65]

The second class of the pair deals with the Woodstock Music and Art Fair of August 1969. An opening segment describes the press reaction to Woodstock and develops the idea of a "garden" presented in Joni Mitchell's "Woodstock" (1970).[66] Using this and other material, I try to present a group portrait of the Woodstock "nation," with its concern for nature, its nostalgia for the past, its resentment of progress and commercialism.[67]

The middle segment of the lecture utilizes the Woodstock soundtrack to describe the communal feeling that some believed defined the Woodstock experience.[68] The third and most important segment describes and interprets an event not recorded on the album: the clash, at once real and symbolic, between Peter Townshend and Abbie Hoffman. Their conflict demonstrated that the Woodstock nation had been drained of its faith in political change; in that sense, the 1960s was over.[69]

Disillusion: the 1970s

Two "subject" lectures bridge the 1960s and 1970s. One, on women, begins with the blatant sexism of the counterculture.[70] A famous example of that sexism is Led Zeppelin's "Whole Lotta Love" (1970).[71] The announcement of the women's movement as a musical phenomenon was delayed until 1972 and

the release of "I Am Woman" by Helen Reddy.[72] Even so, in the early 1970s women rock performers worked in traditional styles; Joni Mitchell and Carly Simon performed a kind of folk music, Laura Nyro played the piano, Carole King produced tepid pop rock, and Janis Joplin sang in a blues medium that had always been open to women. Not until the late 1970s did a woman work seriously in a true rock and roll vein. She was Chrissie Hynde, and she sang for the Pretenders. Although her lyrics were sexually aggressive and hardly anti-male, Hynde had liberated women from a set of restrictive conventions that until then had made real rock music a male preserve. This shows in the Pretenders, "Got Brass in Pocket (I'm Special)" (1979).[73]

Barbara Ehrenreich has recently demonstrated how men, as much as women, have gradually freed themselves from the central binding definitions of gender that prevailed in the 1950s. To demonstrate Ehrenreich's thesis, I contrast the male role described in Gene Vincent's "Wear My Ring" (1956) with that in the Eagles, "Already Gone" (1974).[74]

Richard Aquila's essay provides the structure for my class on the American West. Following Aquila and introducing some material of my own, I use the subject to delineate changing images of the West and what those changing images have to say about American culture.[75]

The last three classes of the semester are given over to exploring the wave of disillusion, helplessness, resignation, and plain conservatism that swept over America in the 1970s and remains with us today. I look at the first half of the 1970s as a series of retreats--retreats <u>from</u> Vietnam, <u>from</u> politics as a source of reform, <u>from</u> the optimism of the 1960s; and retreats <u>into</u> despair, religion, and the <u>self</u>. The despair that swept over black Americans in the early 1970s, when they realized that even rioting could not much alter American society, was best expressed in the work of Sly Stone and Curtis Mayfield.[76] It was that sense of despair and resignation, coupled with a continued interest in the radicalism that the 1960s had generated, that produced the post-1973 flowering of Jamaican reggae music in the United States.[77]

The new interest in reggae was one form of the retreat into religion. But one can observe something similar in mainstream rock--in George Harrison's recording of "My Sweet Lord" (1971), in Jefferson Starship's "Miracles" (1975), and in Stevie Wonder's "I Believe (When I Fall in Love It Will Be Forever)" (1972).[78] The other side of the new religious enthusiasm was the growing importance of evangelism and the moral majority, a phenomenon expressed in "Jesus Rock."[79]

The retreat into the self, known to some as the "Me Decade," has been described at length elsewhere.[80] I present it through the life passage of Jerry Rubin, the 1960s radical who from 1971 through 1975 indulged himself in est, gestalt therapy, bioenergetics, rolfing, massage, jogging, Taichi, Esalen, meditation, Silva Mind Control, and a variety of other "therapies" designed to keep him "in touch" with himself.[81] Musical equivalents of Rubin's experience include Paul McCartney's "The Lovely Linda" (1970), a song about his wife on which McCartney played all the parts himself; Gloria Gaynor's "I Will Survive" (1979); and Billy Joel's "My Life" (1979).[82]

The consciousness that something good and powerful had ended,[83] or been left behind in the 1960s, had something to do with a new topic that had by 1975 crept into rock music. The subject was middle age. Some of these songs,[84] like Neil Young's "Rust Never Sleeps (Hey Hey, My My Into the Black)" (1979), were written by rock performers looking back on the 1960s as a personal golden

age. Others, like Rupert Holme's "Escape (The Pina Colada Song)" (1979),[85] pandered to a narcissistic generation in "mid-life crisis."[86]

Two other ideas of importance push through the surface of the 1970s. One is that many Americans had been convinced--by Watergate, Chappaquiddick, Three-Mile Island, and a decade of "credibility" problems related to Vietnam--that no one and nothing could be trusted. In a search for authenticity reminiscent of the late 1950s, some consumers demanded a return to simpler, more primitive, and hence more "authentic" musical forms.[87] This resulted in the resurrection of groups like the Kinks and the Kingsmen.[88] It also produced the heightened alienation and desperation of New Wave and especially Punk Rock.[89]

The second idea--this one, too, still with us--is that of limits. The idea of limits was at once personal and national. The defeat in Vietnam, the Arab oil boycott, the Iranian hostage crisis, the competition of the Japanese--had together forced the recognition that the American Century had ended, that there were limits to the nation's ability to have its way in the world. In the middle of the Iranian crisis, Kenny Rogers expressed the fantasy of millions of Americans that the United States would cease to be the "Coward of the County" (1979/80).[90] But it was only that--a fantasy. While Jimmy Carter articulated our fears, Devo had the nerve to suggest that the human race was "devolving" toward an inferior form ("Jocko Homo" [1978]) and Pink Floyd, in "Another Brick in the Wall Part 2" (1980), tore away at the institutions of education that were supposed to make western society mobile.[91] And through it all, Bruce Springsteen never let us forget that for most youth there was nothing beyond the "Backstreets."[92] Against this desperation, Springsteen offered the working class a kind of existential hope--the possibility, however slim, of escape from that "town full of losers."[93]

For most teachers, the path of least resistance will be to use rock 'n' roll to illuminate topics (e.g., death, divorce, cities) or to illustrate accepted historical phenomena (e.g., the Cold War, the women's movement, the counterculture of the 1960s, Vietnam). I use both approaches in my course. But instructors should also realize that there can be more to teaching the history of rock 'n' roll than plugging the music into pre-existing frameworks. It can also help us to reinterpret the past, and to understand recent American history in new ways. For example, from the standpoint of popular music, the demarcation between the Eisenhower and Kennedy presidencies seems artificial; Johnny Horton captured the "New Frontier" before Kennedy gave it political definition. The Altamont concert has long been understood as a reflection of the decadence of the counterculture; but some signs of that decadence--of the counterculture's limitations--are to be seen at Woodstock and even at the 1967 Monterey Pop Festival. The relationship between rhythm and blues and white covers makes it possible to see the black nationalism of the 1960s as a reaction to powerful currents of cultural imperialism present in the previous decade.

Nor does the insight to be gleaned from the history of rock 'n' roll depend on hindsight. The popular music of the early 1980s suggests that contemporary Americans are concerned with technology, with various forms of control, and with sexual relations as an arena of physical and emotional violence.[94] Moreover, much of today's mainstream popular music has an ominous tone that was apparent a few years ago only in minor subcultural genres.[95] What all this has to say about the present--or the future--is not entirely obvious. What can be said with certainty is that rock music is a remarkable mirror of American history and culture; it is time that it received greater scholarly attention and more emphasis as a pedagogical device.

NOTES

[1]Charles Burnsworth teaches a very different course in the Department of Music at the State University College at Oneonta, New York 13820. Offered every semester, Burnsworth's course enrolls about the same number of students per year.

[2]I have used the following textbooks: Norman L. Rosenberg, Emily S. Rosenberg, and James R. Moore, In Our Times: America Since World War II (New York, 1976); Robert D. Marcus, A Brief History of the United States Since 1945 (New York, 1975); and James Gilbert, Another Chance: Postwar America, 1945-1968 (New York, 1981).

[3]B. Lee Cooper is the leading exponent of a semi-historical, topical approach to rock music. See his "Music and the Metropolis: Lyrical Images of Life in American Cities, 1950-1980," Teaching History, 6 (Fall, 1981), 72-84, and "'Nothin' Outrun My V-8 Ford': Chuck Berry and the American Motorcar, 1955-1979," JEMF Quarterly, 16 (Spring, 1980), 18-23.

For lists of songs in dozens of subject areas (Apocalyptic, Divorce, Growing Up, Injustice, Old Age, Police, Sexuality, Working, etc.) see Bob Macken, Peter Fornatale, and Bill Ayres, The Rock Music Source Book (Garden City, New York, 1980). The failure to date the songs limits the book's usefulness.

[4]Usually I play full selections rather than excerpts. Students will hear a given selection only once, and they deserve a fair shot at remembering it and enough time to understand why I'm playing it (and to take some notes).

[5]Carl Betz, The Story of Rock, 2nd edition (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1972); Greil Marcus, Mystery Train: Images of America in Rock 'n' Roll Music (New York, 1976); Robert Christgau, Any Old Way You Choose It: Rock and Other Pop Music, 1967-1973 (Baltimore, 1973); R. Serge Denisoff, Sing a Song of Social Significance (Bowling Green, Ohio, 1972); Jonathan Eisen, ed., The Age of Rock: Sounds of the American Cultural Revolution (New York, 1969); Simon Frith, Sound Effects: Youth, Leisure and the Politics of Rock 'n' Roll (New York, 1981). Other books of substantial value include Paul E. Willis, Profane Culture (London, 1978); David Pichaske, A Generation in Motion: Popular Music and Culture in the Sixties (New York, 1979); R. Serge Denisoff, Solid Gold: The Popular Record Industry (New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1975); and B. Lee Cooper, Images of American Society in Popular Music: A Guide to Reflective Teaching (Chicago, 1982).

[6]Richard Aquila, "Images of the American West in Rock Music," Western Historical Quarterly, 11 (October, 1980), 415-32; Denisoff, Sing a Song, 171-76.

[7]John W. Jeffries, "The 'Quest for National Purpose' of 1960," American Quarterly, 30 (Fall, 1978), 451-70.

[8]Hugh Mooney, "Just Before Rock: Pop Music 1950-1953, Reconsidered," Popular Music & Society, 3 (1974), 65-108.

[9]Patti Page, "Mockin' Bird Hill (Tra-la-la Twittle Dee Dee)," words and music by Vaughn Horton, Southern Music Recording Co., Inc., Patti Page version 1950 (Mercury 5595).

[10]Sammy Kaye and His Orchestra, "In the Mission at St. Augustine," words and music by Jack Chiarelli, Republic Music Corporation, 1953, available on

The Fabulous Fifties (Columbia P255510); The McGuire Sisters, "Sincerely," words and music by Harvey Fuqua and Alan Freed, Regent Music Corporation (1954), McGuire Sisters' version 1955 (Coral 87134).

[11]Lousiana Red, "Red's Dream," words and music by Iverson Minter, recorded 1962, reissued on Atomic Cafe (Rounder Records 1034). See also Charles Wolfe, "Nuclear Country: The Atomic Bomb in Country Music," Popular Music & Society, 6 (January 1978), 4-22.

[12]As I first offered the course, a second class focused on Frank Sinatra. I used Sinatra's career to point out that as late as the 1940s and early 1950s, much American popular music was still aimed at ethnic groups, especially Italians. And I played "The House I Live in" (1945) to describe the be-a-good-neighbor attitude toward racial "prejudice" that many white liberals had in the 1940s. To introduce the song I began with the Marian Anderson/ Carnegie Hall incident of 1939, touched on the Harlem race riots of 1945, and played the song as the culmination of a Sinatra address to 4800 Gary, Indiana, high school students. Finally, I used the Sinatra cult of the early 1940s to demonstrate that the adoration of Elvis Presley had a sort of precedent. Arnold Shaw, Sinatra: Twentieth Century Romantic (1968; New York: Pocket Books, 1969), 84-85, 39-53; Earl Wilson, Sinatra: An Unauthorized Biography (New York: New American Library, 1977); J. Frederick MacDonald, "'Hot Jazz,' The Jitterbug, and Misunderstanding: The Generation Gap in Swing, 1935-1945," Popular Music & Society, 2 (Fall, 1972), 43-5.

[13]I use the word "mythology" here not in the sense of something entirely false, but to point up an idea of high intensity that may be flawed, incomplete, or somewhat misleading.

[14]Bill Haley and the Comets, "Rock Around the Clock," words and music by M. Freedman and J. DeKnight, Meyers Publishers, 1955 (Decca 29124); Bill Haley with Haley's Comets, "Rock the Joint," words and music by Crafton-Keene-Bagby, Andrea Music, 1951 (Essex 399); Wynonie Harris, "Good Rockin' Tonight," words and music by Roy Brown, Blue Ridge Publishing Co. (1948), recorded 1947, originally issued on King 4210; Pete Johnson and Joe Turner, "Roll 'Em Pete," words and music by Peter Johnson and Joe Turner, recorded 1938, originally issued 1941, on Vocalion (MX #23892-1).

[15]Giles Oakley, The Devil's Music: A History of the Blues (New York: 1976); Charlie Gillett, The Sound of the City: The Rise of Rock and Roll (New York, 1972), 138, 144-45, 153-57; Peter Guralnick, Feel Like Going Home: Portraits in Blues and Rock 'n' Roll (1971; New York: Vintage Books, 1981), chapter 2.

[16]Arnold Shaw, The Rock Revolution (New York: Paperback Library, 1971), 31-54; Jonathan Kamin, "The White R & B Audience and the Music Industry, 1952-1956," Popular Music & Society, 4 (1975), 170-87; Gillett, Sound of the City, 178-80; Arnold Shaw, Honkers and Shouters: The Golden Years of Rhythm and Blues (New York: Collins Books, 1978), 123-129.

[17]Orioles with Sonny Till, "Crying in the Chapel," words and music by Artie Glenn, Unichappell Music, Inc., recorded 1953, originally issued on Roulette RE-111.

[18]Hank Ballard and the Midnighters, "Work with Me, Annie," words and music by Henry Ballard, Lois Publishing Company, 1954 (Federal F12169) [Etta James cleaned up the Ballard version and released "Dance with Me, Henry"]; Hank Ballard and the Midnighters, "Annie Had a Baby," words and music by Henry Glover and Lois Mann, Jay & Cee Music Corporation, 1954 (Federal F12195).

[19]Kamin, "White Audience."

[20]Joe Turner, "Shake, Rattle and Roll," words and music by Charles Calhoun, Progressive Music Publishing Co., Inc., 1954 (Atlantic 1026); Bill Haley, "Shake, Rattle and Roll," music by Charles Calhoun, Progressive Music Publishing Co., Inc., 1954 (Decca 29204).

[21]Belz, Story of Rock, 25-30; cf. Michael Bane, White Boy Singin' the Blues (New York, 1982), 98-99.

[22]Bane interprets rock 'n' roll as a genuine fusion of white and black cultures. See White Boy, 17-18, 105. Some critics have seen a related cultural imperialism, carried out against third world black culture, in a 1981 album by Brian Eno and David Byrne, My Life in the Bush of Ghosts. See the review in Rolling Stone, April 2, 1981, 60. In a sense, then, the cultural imperialism of rock music parallels major transformations in the structure of the national and international political economy.

A lively discussion can be generated by playing originals and covers and letting the class describe and analyze the differences.

[23]Pat Boone, "Ain't That a Shame," words and music by Antoine "Fats" Domino and Dave Bartholomew, Travis Music Co., 1955 (Dot 15377). Domino's original version was on the Imperial label.

[24]Alfred C. Kinsey, Wardell B. Pomeroy, and Clyde E. Martin, Sexual Behavior in the Human Male (Philadelphia, 1948); Norman Mailer, "The White Negro," reprinted in Advertisements for Myself (New York, 1959).

[25]For example, Reuben D. Behlmer, From Teens to Marriage (St. Louis, 1959).

[26]Mailer, "The White Negro," 285. On the idealization of Negro culture in the 1950s, see Dick Hebdige, Subculture: The Meaning of Style (London, 1979), 46-48, 53-54.

[27]Jerry Hopkins, Elvis: A Biography (New York: Warner Books edition, 1972), 56.

[28]Elvis Presley, "(There'll Be) Peace in the Valley (For Me)," words and music by Dorsey, recorded 1957, reissued on Elvis--A Legendary Performer: Volume 1 (RCA CPL1-0341-B).

Presley's personality and penchant for vigilantism can profitably be compared with Joe McCarthy's notorious vulgarity and disdain for procedure. See Red West, Sonny West, and Dave Hebler, Elvis: What Happened? (New York, 1977), and Richard H. Rovere, Senator Joe McCarthy (New York, 1959). Presley might also be contrasted with another ideal type of the 1950s, the "organization man." See William H. Whyte, Jr., The Organization Man (New York, 1956).

[30]In Sing a Song, 171-76.

[31]Jody Reynolds, "Endless Sleep," words and music by J. Reynolds and D. Nance, Johnston-Montei-Elizabeth Publishers, 1958 (Demon 1507); Mark Dinning, "Teen Angel," words and music JNR-Surrey, Acuff-Rose Publications, Inc., 1960 (M-G-M 12845).

[32]A.B. Hollingshead, Elmtown's Youth: The Impact of Social Classes on Adolescents (New York: Science Editions, 1961), 302-307, 196-98.

[33] Marty Robbins, "White Sport Coat," words and music by M. Robbins, Acuff-Rose Publishers, 1957 (Columbia 40864).

[34] Danny and the Juniors, "At the Hop," words and music by A. Singer, J. Medora, and D. White, Music Pub. Co., 1957 (ABC Paramount 9871).

[35] Evan Hunter, The Blackboard Jungle (New York: Avon Books, 1976), 175-83.

The role of rock 'n' roll in the countercultural rebellion of the 1950s deserves more attention than I have given it in this essay or in my course. The most obvious example is the violence and vandalism that regularly took place at showings of rock 'n' roll films and at some concerts. These "riots," as they were called, occurred in many cities in England and the United States. See, for example, New York Times, July 10, 1956, 26:8; July 12, 1956, 25:1; September 5, 1956, 22:7; September 12, 1956, 40:1; November 4, 1956, 20:4; February 23, 1957, 1:2, 12:2-4; April 15, 1957, 23:6. On the British Teddy Boys, whose subculture was closely tied to the new music, see Hebdige, Subculture, chapter 4. For a brief discussion of Blackboard Jungle and related films, see Andrew Dowdy, The Films of the Fifties: The American State of Mind (1973; New York: William Morrows and Co., Inc., 1975), chapter 8. George Lipsitz treats rock 'n' roll as a phenomenon of social class in Class and Culture in Cold War America: "A Rainbow at Midnight" (South Hadley, Massachusetts, 1982), 195-255.

[36] Graham Murdock and Robin McCron, "Youth and Class: The Career of a Confusion," in Geoff Mungham and Geoff Pearson, eds., Working Class Youth Culture (London, 1978), 10-26.

[37] Chuck Berry, "Almost Grown," words and music by Chuck Berry, Arc Music Corp., 1959 (Chess 1722). Compare with Gary U.S. Bonds, "School Is In" (1961), which celebrates the opening of school as a relief from the boredom of summer (a boredom, one suspects, caused in part by unemployment).

[38] It didn't help that Eisenhower had a heart attack, his assistant Sherman Adams was found to have accepted improper gifts, and Vice President Richard Nixon's Latin American entourage was greeted with jeers.

[39] Fred J. Cook, The Corrupted Land: The Social Morality of Modern America (New York, 1966); Richard S. Tedlow, "Intellect on Television: The Quiz Show Scandals of the 1950s," American Quarterly, 28 (Fall, 1976), 483-95; John Morthland, "The Payola Scandal," in The Rolling Stone Illustrated History of Rock & Roll, ed. Jim Miller (New York, 1976), 102-03.

The moral pretense of this period may account for the public's reaction to Jerry Lee Lewis's 1958 marriage to a thirteen-year old cousin. Guralnick, Feel Like Going Home, 184. It may also have had something to do with the Buddy Holly cult that emerged following the singer's death in a plane crash in 1959, for no other performer had seemed so unconcerned with the business side of the music industry, so--in a word--"innocent." See Dave Laing, Buddy Holly (1971; New York: Collier Books, 1972).

[40] The liner notes are quoted in Belz, Story of Rock, 83-84.

[41] In class, I demonstrate this quality by playing an excerpt from Kennedy's election eve address of November 8, 1960, and "After Dinner Conversations," from Vaughn Meder's parody of the Kennedy family.

[42]Both Eisenhower and Kennedy sought to exorcise flabbiness by promoting national physical fitness. See Jerry Kirshenbaum and Robert Sullivan, "Hold On There, America," Sports Illustrated (February 14, 1983), 72-74.

[43]Johnny Horton, "Battle of New Orleans," words and music by J. Driftwood, Warden Publishers, 1959 (Columbia 41339). On the Battle of New Orleans, see John William Ward, Andrew Jackson: Symbol for an Age (New York, 1955). The idea is to demonstrate that Horton's song participates in the legend of the Battle of New Orleans, and that the revival of that legend in 1959 served a purpose. On the origins of "The Battle of New Orleans," see Judith McCulloh, "Uncle Absie Morrison's Historical Tunes," Mid-South Folklore, 3 (Winter, 1975), 95-104.

[44]In this sense, it might also be reasonable to interpret the production of the Fabian/Rydell era as a cultural equivalent of folk music, though intended for a younger and perhaps less educated audience. But the era of the pop star should also be seen in part as an effort by the record companies to hedge the risks of competition by focusing less on music and more on production and performers (much the same thing happened in the film industry in the 1970s and 1980s).

[45]I use a cassette tape, "Vietnam: The Music of Resistance," produced by the Great Atlantic Radio Conspiracy, Baltimore, Maryland. See also Jens Lund, "Country Music Goes to War: Songs for the Red-Blooded American," Popular Music & Society, 1 (Summer, 1972), 210-230. Rock Music and Malaise in America, 1966-1972, a 28-minute tape edited and produced by David Gellatly, Robert L. Zangrando, George Keros, and the Akron Collective, Akron, Ohio 44325, covers too much ground too quickly, but it may be used effectively to introduce or summarize the period.

[46]The rock-as-poetry approach is taken up in Robert Christgau, "Rock Lyrics are Poetry (Maybe)," in Eisen, ed., The Age of Rock, 230-43; Richard Goldstein, The Poetry of Rock (New York, 1968); Matt Damsker, ed., Rock Voices: The Best Lyrics of an Era (New York, 1980); and Steven Goldberg, "Bob Dylan and the Poetry of Salvation," in Bob Dylan: A Retrospective, ed. Craig McGregor (New York, 1972), 364-77.

[47]Dylan's struggle to establish a tolerable identity is effectively described in Anthony Scaduto, Bob Dylan (1971; New York: Signet Books, 1973).

[48]Bob Dylan, "Maggie's Farm," words and music by Bob Dylan, Warner Brothers, Inc., publishers, 1965, introduced by Dylan on the album, Bringing It All Back Home (Columbia 2328).

[49]Only months earlier Lyndon Johnson had ordered the first sustained bombing of North Vietnam and sent the first ground combat troops into the South. In response, University of Michigan students held the first anti-war "teach-in." Dylan understood that history had bypassed the folk movement, and he left it behind. On the other hand, Dylan had achieved stardom on the basis of what seemed an undeniable commitment and authenticity; if Dylan could get out so easily, perhaps he was simply an opportunist. The reaction to Dylan's migration might have been different had the Newport Dylan demonstrated a new commitment to another level of politics and protest. Instead, he had apparently opted for a new individualism, to be "like a Rolling Stone." See Morris Dickstein, Gates of Eden: American Culture in the Sixties (New York, 1977), 188, 191; Paul Nelson, "Newport Folk Festival, 1965," in Bob Dylan: A Retrospective, 73-76; "Letters to Sing Out!," in Bob Dylan: A Retrospective, 117-120; Belz, Story of Rock, 162-63; and George Monteiro, "Dylan in the Sixties," South Atlantic Quarterly, 73 (Spring, 1974), 161-72.

[50]The Beatles, "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band," words and music by John Lennon and Paul McCartney, Northern Songs Ltd., Maclen Music, Inc., 1967, performed as the introduction to the album, Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band (Capitol 2653). See Richard Poirier, "Learning from the Beatles," in The Age of Rock, 169; Murray Kempton, "The Beatles," The Age of Rock, 147-48; Alan Aldridge, "Beatles Not All Turned On," The Age of Rock, 139-40; Hunter Davies, The Beatles: The Authorized Biography (New York, 1968), 220; Belz, Story of Rock, 128, 147.

The Beatles became cultural heroes for another reason. They managed to resolve one of the central tensions in American life--the tension between the individual and the group, between laissez-faire and nation-state. Though this conflict is always with us, it was especially prominent in the 1964 presidential campaign, featuring Lyndon Johnson and Barry Goldwater. Here were two great visions: the Johnson vision of a great cooperative commonwealth; the Goldwater vision of a new personal and economic individualism. They seemed irreconciliable But it was precisely that reconciliation that the Beatles achieved. As a musical group, they offered a unique unity, and yet they were clearly and powerfully individuals, whose personal qualities were not lost in the larger group. While it leans toward a vision of community and group, "A Little Help From My Friends" (1967) expresses the two-sided perspective that was part of the Beatles' success.

[51]David M. Potter, People of Plenty: Economic Abundance and the American Character (Chicago, 1954); John Kenneth Galbraith, The Affluent Society (New York: Mentor Books, 1958), 13-16; Charles C. Alexander, Holding the Line: The Eisenhower Era, 1952-1961 (Bloomington, Indiana, 1975), chapter 4.

[52]Michael Harrington, The Other America: Poverty in the United States (New York, 1962).

[53]The Rolling Stones, "Factory Girl," words and music by Mick Jagger, Richard-Gideon music, on the album Beggars Banquet (London PS 539).

[54]The best source material is in the film of the Altamont concert, "Gimme Shelter."

[55]The High Numbers, "I'm the Face," written by Peter Meaden, Campbell Connelly & Co., Inc., 1964, on the album The Who, Odds & Ends, 1974 (MCA-2126).

The story of the Mods is told in a rich sociological literature. See especially, Dick Hebdige, "The Meaning of Mod," in Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson, eds., Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain (New York, 1975), 87-96, and John Clarke and Tony Jefferson, "Working Class Youth Cultures," in Geoff Mungham and Geoff Pearson, eds., Working Class Youth Cultures (London, 1976), chapter 7. The more popular material includes The Who's recreation of the Mod movement in the film "Quadrophenia" (1973), and the novel based on the film, Alan Fletcher's Quadrophenia (London, 1979). The musical details are available in Nicholas Schaffner, The British Invasion: From the First Wave to the New Wave (New York, 1983).

[56]Janis Ian, "Society's Child," words and music by Janis Ian, Dialogue Music Inc., 1967 (Verve Folkways).

[57]Gordon Lightfoot, "Black Day in July," words and music by Gordon Lightfoot, 1980 (Liberty LN-10038).

[58]Denisoff, Sing a Song, 39; William E. Leuchtenburg, A Troubled Feast: American Society Since 1945 (1973; rev. ed., Boston, 1979), 171.

[59]Wovoka, "Motown . . . And the Heart Attack Machine," reprinted in Radical America, 8 (January-February, 1975), 61-66. On Motown's Berry Gordy, Jr., see Current Biography, July 1975; Who's Who in America, 1978-79; and Gillett, Sound of the City, 242-49.

[60]Some interesting parallels can be drawn between the music of Ray Charles and the civil rights movement of the late 1950s and early 1960s. See Ray Charles and David Ritz, Brother Ray: Ray Charles' Own Story (New York, 1978), 140-141, 182-183, 193, 295-301.

[61]For example, Wilson Pickett, "I'm a Midnight Mover," words and music by Wilson Pickett and Bobby Womack, Cotillion-Tracebob-Erva, on the album Best of Wilson Pickett, vol. II (Atlantic SD 8290).

[62]For example, The Temptations, "The Way You Do the Things You Do," music by William Robinson and Bobby Rogers, Jobete Music Co., Inc., 1964 (Gordy). See Jon Landau, "A Whiter Shade of Black," in The Age of Rock, 298-306; cf. Gillett, Sound of the City, 244-46.

[63]Vincent Bugliosi, with Curt Gentry, Helter Skelter: The True Story of the Manson Murders (1974; New York: Bantam Books edition, 1975). For example, the song "Blackbird" (1965) told Manson that the Beatles were programming blacks to start the revolution that would eventually lead to a new white supremacy. The word "arise" in that song would in 1969 be found written on the living room wall in Leno LaBianca's own blood. "Blackbird" is on The Beatles (Apple SWBO101).

[64]See, for example, Tom Wolfe, The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test (New York, 1968); Lawrence Chenoweth, "The Rhetoric of Hope and Despair: A Study of the Jimi Hendrix Experience and the Jefferson Airplane," American Quarterly, 23 (Spring, 1971), 25-45; Myra Friedman, Buried Alive: The Biography of Janis Joplin (New York: 1973); Belz, Story of Rock, 197-208; Gerome Ragni and James Rado, Hair: The American Tribal Love-Rock Musical (New York, 1969); Bruce Cook, The Beat Generation (New York, 1971), chapter 11.

[65]Jefferson Airplane, "White Rabbit," words and music by Gracie Slick, Copperpenny Music Publishing Co./Irving Music, Inc., 1967 (RCA Victor 9248); Country Joe and the Fish, "Marijuana," words and music by McDonald, Melton, Cohon, Hirsh, Ryan, Joyful Wisdom Music, recorded live 1968, on the album The Life and Times of Country Joe and the Fish (Vanguard VDS 27/28); Iron Butterfly, "In-a-gadda-da-vidda," words and music by Doug Ingle, Cotillion Music, Inc./Ten-East Music/Itasca Music, 1968 (Atco 6606).

[66]Joni Mitchell, "Woodstock," words and music by Joni Mitchell, Sequomb Publishing Co., on the album Ladies of the Canyon, 1970 (Reprise 6376).

[67]John Brady, "An Afternoon with Max Yasgur," Popular Music & Society, 3 (1974), 24-40; Jerry Rubin, Do It: Scenarios of the Revolution (New York, 1970), 224-229 (on people's park); Mary Jane Carle Johnson, "Rock Music as a Reflector of Social Attitudes Among Youth During the 1960s," Ph.D. dissertation, St. Louis University, 1978, 120-21 (words to Woodstock); Robert Stephen Spitz, Barefoot in Babylon: The Creation of the Woodstock Music Festival, 1969 (New York, 1979); Abbie Hoffman, Woodstock Nation: A Talk-Rock Album (1969; New York: Pocket Book edition, 1971); Belz, Story of Rock, 210-212; Wavy Gravy, "Hog Farming at Woodstock," The Sixties, ed. Lynda Rosen Obst (New York, 1977), 274-79; Jerry Hopkins, Jim Marshall, Baron Wolman, Festival! (New York, 1970).

[68]Woodstock, 1970 (Cotillion SD3-500); cf. Cook, Beat Generation, chapter 12.

[69]Hoffman, Woodstock Nation, 140-43; John Sinclair, Guitar Army (New York, 1972); Denisoff, Sing a Song, 156; William J. Scheick, "WHO'S NEXT: A Reappraisal," Popular Music & Society, 3 (1974), 41-45.

The confrontation occurred on stage, during a performance of "Tommy" by The Who. In class, I play "Tommy" while describing the history of Abbie Hoffman and the Yippies. Hoffman and his cohorts had arrived at Woodstock with one concern: to free John Sinclair, the White Panther Party founder who had been jailed on a narcotics charge. Unable to convince festival promoters to grant him access to the stage microphone to promote his cause, Hoffman leaped onto the stage during The Who performance (here I stop the music), shouted "Free John Sin . . ." and was struck on the head with an electric guitar wielded by Peter Townshend. See Hoffman, Woodstock Nation, 140-43.

[70]I begin by comparing and contrasting Betty Friedan's The Feminine Mystique (New York, 1963) with Gracie Slick's "Crazy Miranda," and then, using The Beatles' "I want to Hold Your Hand" (1964), I describe the unisex movement of the mid-1960s. See Jerome L. Rodnitzky, "Songs of Sisterhood: The Music of Liberation," Popular Music & Society, 4 (1975), 77-85.

[71]Led Zeppelin, "Whole Lotta Love," words and music by James Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones, and John Bonham, Superhype Music, Inc., 1970 (Atlantic 2690). See Christgau, Any Old Way, 113-116, 223-24, 268.

[72]Helen Reddy, "I Am Woman," words and music by H. Reddy and R. Burton, Buggerlugs Music Co., 1972 (Capitol 3350).

[73]The Pretenders, "Got Brass in Pocket (I'm Special)," words and music by Chrissie Hynde and James Honeyman Scott, Modern Publishing Ltd., 1979, on the album Pretenders (Sire 6083). See Jim Miller, ed., The Rolling Stone Illustrated History of Rock & Roll (1976; revised edition, New York: 1980), 339-46, 439.

[74]Barbara Ehrenreich, The Hearts of Men: American Dreams and the Flight From Commitment (New York, 1983); Gene Vincent and His Blue Caps, "Wear My Ring," words and music by Bobby Darin and Don Kirschner, Duchess Music Corp., 1956 (Capitol F3763); The Eagles, "Already Gone," words and music J. Tempchin/ R. Strendlund, Jazzbird Music/Benchmark Music, 1974 (Asylum E-45072).

[75]I talk briefly about Frederick Jackson Turner and the frontier, about the Edenic myth, the China market, and the Great American desert, and finally, about the romantic and exotic West of the late 19th century. In 1960, when I pick up the story from a musical perspective, this romantic imagery still had some hold on Americans. Hopalong Cassidy films were still on TV, and Marty Robbins was singing about "El Paso" (1960). By mid-decade the West had become identified with the sun and fun mythology of California (Mamas and Papas, "California Dreamin'" [1966]). As the great expectations of the 1960s disappeared at Altamont, Kent State, My Lai, and Newark, the California dream seemed less sure. The West retained its hold, but it was a new West, the West of "Galveston" (Glenn Campbell, 1969), and Denver ("Rocky Mountain High" [John Denver, 1972]). At the same time, films such as "The Great Northfield Minnesota Raid" were telling us that the West, like Vietnam, was dirty and violent, or, by the mid-1970s, that the West had entirely disappeared--that all there was left to be was an "Urban Cowboy," or an "Electric Cowboy," or, as Glenn Campbell sang it, a "Rhinestone Cowboy" (1975). Finally, the West became identified with exploitation and humiliation (Michael Murphy, "Geronimo's Cadillac" [1975]).

[76]A good example is Curtis Mayfield, "Freddie's Dead," words and music by Curtis Mayfield, Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Co. (1972), from the sound track to the motion picture Superfly (RS-1-3046). Christgau, "Any Old Way," 312.

[77]A good example is Bob Marley, "Burnin' and Lootin'," words and music by Bob Marley, Cayman Music, Inc., 1973 (Island 7 90031-1). Hazel Reid, "Bob Marley: Up From Babylon," Freedomways, 21 (Third Quarter, 1981), 171-79; Michael Brandes, "Roots, Rock, Reggae and Rastafarianism," The Leader, April 6, 1981, 13; Craig Marks, "The Jamaican Connection: A Reggae Legacy," The Leader, March 2, 1981 (The Leader is the student newspaper at the State University of New York, Fredonia). See also Hebdige, Subculture, esp. 35-39, and Kenneth Bilby, "The Impact of Reggae in the United States," Popular Music & Society, 5 (1977), 17-22.

[78]George Harrison, "My Sweet Lord," words and music by George Harrison, Harrisongs Music, Inc., from the album All Things Must Pass, released 1970 (Capitol 2995); Jefferson Starship, "Miracles," 1975, on the album Red Octopus (Grunt 0999); Stevie Wonder, "I Believe (When I Fall in Love It Will be Forever)," lyrics by Yvonne Wrights, words by Stevie Wonder, on the album Talking Book, 1981 (Motown 2-47085).

[79]Edward F. Heenan and H. Rosanne Falkenstein, "Religious Rock: What It Is Saying," Popular Music & Society, 2 (Summer, 1973), 311-19; Gary Land, "The Evangelical Community and the Rise of Jesus Rock, 1965-1980," unpublished paper, 1981. Gary Land is in the Department of History, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Minnesota 49103. See also Alvin Rudisill, "The Seventies: Religion and Students and the Future," The Lutheran Quarterly, 23 (February, 1971), 10-20.

[80]Christopher Lasch, The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations (New York, 1978); Barbara Snyder, "The SPA Life," Buffalo News Magazine, December 10, 1978, 14-17; Francesca Stanfill, "Living Well is Still the Best Revenge," New York Times Magazine, December 21, 1980, 20-25, 54, 68, 70, 72,76. Cf. Michael Maccoby, "Corporate Character Types: The Gamesman," Psychology Today, 12 (October, 1978), 60-61, 113-114.

[81]Jerry Rubin, Growing (up) at Thirty-Seven (New York, 1976).

[82]Paul McCartney, "The Lovely Linda," 1970, on the album McCartney (Apple 3363); Gloria Gaynor, "I Will Survive," 1979 (Polydor 14508); Billy Joel, "My Life," words and music B. Joel, CBS Inc., 1978 (Columbia Hall of Fame 13-33381).

[83]Jay Martin, "A Watertight Watergate Future: Americans in a Post-American Age," Antioch Review, 33 (Summer, 1975), 7-24; Joe McGinniss, Heroes (1976; New York: Pocket Book Edition, 1977).

[84]Neil Young, "Rust Never Sleeps (Hey Hey, My My Into the Black)," 1979 (Reprise 49031).

[85]Rupert Holmes, "Escape (The Pina Colada Song)," 1979, words and music by Rupert Holmes (Infinity 50,035).

[86]Gail Sheehy, Passages: Predictable Crises of Adult Life (New York, 1977).

[87]One segment of the music-buying public looked warily at groups such as the Eagles and Supertramp that were extraordinarily smooth and finely produced.

[88]For example, Kingsmen, "Louie, Louie," words and music by Richard Berry, Limax Music, 1963 (Wand 143).

[89]Hebdige, Subculture, 106-112. Robert H. Tillman, "Punk Rock and the Construction of 'Pseudo-Political' Movements," Popular Music & Society, 7 (1980), 165-75. An example of California New Wave is Warren Zevon, "Roland the Headless Thompson Gunner," words and music by Warren Zevon, from the album Excitable Boy, 1978 (Asylum GE-118).

[90]Kenny Rogers, "Coward of the County," words and music by R. Bowling and B.E. Wheeler, Roger Bowling Music/Sleepy Hollow Music Corporation, 1979 (Capitol 20614).

[91]Devo, "Jocko Homo," words and music by Mark Mothersbaugh, Devo Music/ Virgin Music Ltd. (1978), on the album Q. Are We Not Men? We Are Devo!, 1978 (Warner Bros. BSK 3239); Pink Floyd, "Another Brick in the Wall Part 2," 1979, Pink Floyd Music Ltd., from the album, The Wall (Columbia 36183). See also Jack McDonough, "Review Essay of Jackson Browne," Popular Music & Society, 4 (1975), 242-250.

The problems posed by programming (e.g., cults, computers, and cloning) also appear in the rock music of the late 1970s and early 1980s. See, for example, the irony of Rod Stewart's "Passion" (1980, WEA Records, BV), and Pink Floyd, "Another Brick in the Wall Part 2," 1979, above.

[92]Dave Marsh, Born to Run: The Bruce Springsteen Story (Garden City, New York, 1979). The point is made well in Bruce Springsteen, "Born to Run," words and music by Bruce Springsteen, CBS Inc. (1975), from the album, Born to Run, 1975 (Columbia JC 33795).

[93]The optimistic side of Springsteen is less prominent than it once was. See his 1982 release, Nebraska. See also Billy Joel, "Allentown" (1982).

[94]On technology, see Styx, "Mr. Roboto," words and music by Dennis De Young, Almo Music Corp. 1983 (A & M Records 2525-S); on control, Alice Cooper, "Clones (We're All)," words and music by David Carron, Mount Hope Music, 1980 (Warner Bros. WBS 49204); on sexuality, The Eurythmics, "Sweet Dreams (Are Made of This)," words and music Lenox-Stewart, Sunbury Music Ltd., 1982 (RCA PB-13533).

[95]Examples include The Motels, "Suddenly Last Summer," words and music Martha Davis, Clean Sheets Music, 1983 (Capitol B-5271), and Billy Idol, "White Wedding," words and music B. Idol, Rare Blue Music, Inc., 1982 (Chrysalis VS4 42697).