



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
1983 Volume IV: America in the Sixties: Culture and Counter-Culture

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## The Sixties: Notes of Discord

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We call it, “United States History” yet so often it is dates, wars, heroes long dead, explanations abstract and difficult to relate to. It is a series of things that happened to other people in other times and it’s lacking that special something that would bring it to life for us all.

I decided to write this unit to try to add another aspect to the study of a very unique decade: the sixties. The historic perspective I wish to explore is one that did not become frozen in the pages of a history book. It is one that can be found for a quarter a play; on an oldies but goodies album; on WAPP on your FM dial; in private collections and record shops. It is the music of the sixties and it offers us a vehicle for bringing to life the feelings, events, and spirit of that decade. It is a bridge that unifies those who were a part of those times, those who were but children during those times, and those who missed those times altogether.

Besides being a lot of fun, rock, folk, and soul music teaches us about the sixties bringing us vicariously to Woodstock, Berkely, Washington, and San Francisco. Where is the sixties child who actually stood outside the gates of Berkely in 1964 and again in 1969, at Columbia in 1968, at Montgomery in 1963, at Washington in 1963 and 1967, here, there and everywhere that the histories, interviews, and media recollections take us? <sup>1</sup> Even those of us who grew up and took part in the sixties couldn’t be everywhere and part of everything. So the music offers us an accurate record of the people and events of the times. In the very oldest sense they are the records of history, a common history of uncommon times.

I’ve chosen to do this because I can clearly remember how much I loved a particular history course which might have been just another dreary rehash of dates and events had it not been for a professor who obviously loved her subject and helped us all to love it too, by making it into a story that came alive in her class. I was, unfortunately, in college then and I recall thinking of all the other courses and all the young people for whom history is a requirement. I realized it didn’t have to be that way. For children with learning disabilities, “slow” learners, or hard to motivate youngsters this requirement can become a formidable burden. Since these are the kinds of students I work with, they are the ones I had most in mind when I wrote this. Music is such a universal language. It is probably the one thing more than anything that erases academic labels and gives all people an equal and common bond for communicating. I believe all levels of students would enjoy, benefit, and learn from this material.

This unit is meant to “unearth the cave.” As you and your students explore, you may expand the music, add to the issues, or adjust the lessons to suit your needs and concerns. My hope is, that after considering my

arguments for incorporating music into the teaching of this era, you'll agree that perhaps this material can provide us with an additional means for getting our students to relate to, enjoy, and understand that history is an all encompassing epic. It is not just a list of isolated dates highlighting wars and other events they find hard to imagine.

To understand history one must understand and examine the culture existing at the time. During the sixties, the largest segment of the population in the United States belonged to an age group categorized as "youth." Prior to this time, the developmental stages were more rigidly broken down; preadolescence, adolescence, teen-age, adult. The teenage years were the time for "growing up;" after age 19, you were thought to be an adult albeit a young one. The sixties changed that, common threads brought different age groups together and it became clear that age did not dictate movement from one developmental stage to the next. Youth thought of themselves, and therefore accepted amongst their ranks, anyone from roughly the beginning of the teenage years to age thirty. It was a commonly believed notion that you couldn't trust anyone over thirty. As Peter Gordon observes: "rock music was a major force behind the youth movement of the sixties, and was used by youth to express both their mass culture and their individuality." <sup>2</sup> If we study the music of the sixties we will better understand why the counterculture formed, how the youth movement sustained itself as a cohesive group, and how it reacted and responded to what it saw happening in our country and the world.

To help us in defining the concept of "youth" it is useful to call upon Kenneth Kenniston who studied the youth of the sixties and wrote several important books on his observations. In 1971 he said, "we are witnessing today the emergence on a mass scale of a previously unrecognized state of life. . . youth," which he defined further as a stage of life between adolescence and adulthood. Kenniston defined youth by codifying his observations of sixties youth into certain common patterns of behavior. He saw the central conflict of youth as the "tension between self and society." He also noted that in addition to this tension, youth is characterized by the "refusal of socialization," in which the individual rejects society after several adolescent attempts to fit into it. Finally, in youth great emphasis is placed on movement of any kind; adulthood is equated with stasis and death. The goal of youth is *to move* ; the direction is secondary. <sup>3</sup> Rock music spoke directly to that youth that Kenniston described, and its effect was magnified by the fact that in the sixties more than half of the population fit into this category.

Young people have always been and continue to be rebellious at some point in time. But the sixties' combination of a large segment of the population sharing common beliefs and feelings particularly in regard to such national issues as the Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam War, backed by a force (rock music) which provided a means of expression, served to further unify and reinforce the feeling of alienation from mainstream American life that young people were feeling, and to give them the belief that they could possibly change things. In an article in *Rolling Stone* , a magazine which carried a lot of credibility with the youth movement, Ralph Gleason said: "At no time in American history has youth possessed the strength it has now. Trained by music and linked by music, it has the power for good to change the world. This power for good carries the reverse, the power for evil." <sup>4</sup> This observation may be the wisdom of hindsight since it was made in 1968, yet it certainly reinforced the belief that many young people still had.

This unit will survey the events that generated the critical issues for young people during the sixties, the feelings that were generated by those events, and the music that spoke to or about the feelings and events.

### **Part One: *Rebels Without a Cause : Youth in the Fifties***

Just as it is essential to go back to the fifties and/or even the forties to be able to understand the sixties

historically and sociologically, so it is that in order to understand the music of the sixties we must look back to the music of the fifties.

In the early fifties, singers like Rosemary Clooney, Patti Page, Nat “King” Cole, Frank Sinatra, and Frankie Lane were still very popular even with the young. Then a disc jockey named Alan Freed coined the phrase “Rock and Roll” for the black based rhythm and blues style music he was playing on his radio show; “The Moondog Rock and Roll Show” in Cleveland. He introduced artists like Fats Domino, Chuck Berry, and Little Richard and changed the face of broadcasting overnight. Rhythm and blues had long been popular with black artists but before Freed, they were unable to reach white audiences. Freed’s show became the most popular show in Cleveland and the rock and roll craze was born. But Freed was just beginning. He also organized the first live rock and roll concert showcasing the most popular groups of the times. When 25,000 fans tried to force their way into a hall that could only hold 10,000, March 22, 1952 became the historic date of the first rock and roll riot.

Suddenly, groups sprang up trying to imitate the primarily black rock and roll sound. Spirits were high, the message was clear: make life one big party night and day. In fact, a Western Swing group called Bill Haley and the Comets, rode their 45 with that theme into stardom. The song was “Rock Around the Clock” and it reflected the feeling of the times. While Fats Domino “found his thrill on Blueberry Hill” and Little Richard sang of “Miss Molly who sure liked to ball” (which he claimed meant dance), Chuck Berry sang of the release rock and roll provided from such burdens as school and ended by saying, “Long live rock and roll!” Parents were clearly worried, and with good reason. For the first time teenagers had their own music. Styles of dress and hair changed, jive and bop talk became “in”, and it appeared that parents were losing control. Rock and roll was shaking the very foundations of “small town” American values.

Magazine articles appeared in which rock and roll music was condemned along with its stars as lascivious, suggestive, and immoral. In another attempt to capture the essence of the movement, rock and roll was described as “a vicarious sexual experience.”<sup>5</sup> Sex and rock and roll have often been linked and with good reason. In the fifties, sex was sacrosanct. Parents, as representatives of social authority were the major obstacles to contend with for young people. Sex was not open to discussion and certainly not flaunted in public. In their song, “Wake Up Little Suzie,” the Everly Brothers illustrate my point. The lyrics explain: “The movie wasn’t so hot/didn’t have much of a plot/we fell asleep/in the movies deep/ now our reputation is shot.” Obviously something quite innocent, yet as the song goes on to reveal their friends will tease them and say “Ooo-lala” but their biggest worry is: “What’re we gonna tell your momma/what’re we gonna tell your pop?” The implication was clearly that no matter how innocently it had happened, they would have an impossible time explaining it to Suzie’s Mom and Dad.

Rock and Roll made the already existing communication gap even broader. It was not the lyrics that parents were upset with. It was the subtle yet constant message that the music projected to them. It was the feeling that their children were being snatched away from them by an “alien” force and that that force (rock and roll) was undermining the very foundation of America, the family unit.

When we frame the discussion of this music, it must be emphasized that in that time, “old” values and norms were still dominant in America. Since things are so explicit today, it may come as a shock to young people to find that in 1953, society objected to the use of the word “virgin” in Otto Preminger’s movie, “The Moon is Blue.” Adults saw rock and roll as an intrusion on their control over their children and an invitation to become juvenile delinquents. Basically they saw the music as a belligerent confrontation with society. Teenagers did not share this view. They didn’t view rock and roll as either a cheap thrill or the basis for a revolution at all. It

was, instead, an outlet that provided them with good feelings in a repressive environment. Best of all, it was their own.

Rock and roll did not produce delinquents; it did challenge the norms and acceptable institutions and offer vivid images and wild adventures to teenagers. It gave teenage rebels something to identify with. It also held out a safe means to be defiant, adventuresome, and united with an identifiable community of peers apart from the acceptable norms of society for middle class kids. Those who had always found school a burden could hear Chuck Berry sing "School Days" and suddenly rise from being the dummies who couldn't get along in school to being the in-crowd who'd always known what Chuck was saying, school was a drag. "Sweet Little Sixteen" really rocked the dress code by having the girl in the song wear tight dresses, lipstick, and high heeled shoes at night.

Rock and roll broke down other barriers as well. Rebellious teens or greasers as they were known then always had a crowd. But what about straight looking guys with glasses? They were usually the squares until Buddy Holly became a rock and roll idol, glasses and all. He is also credited with bringing another change to the music. His songs returned to the subtle art of implication rather than full disclosure of what happened to his characters. An example of this is "Peggy Sue." In his lyrics he sings: "If you knew Peggy Sue/then you'd know why I feel blue/ about Peggy/my Peggy Sue." We never know why he's sad or what will become of him or Peggy Sue. It is characteristic of Holly to leave something to his audience's imagination. I mention him because he was a tremendous influence on later greats such as the Beatles, Kinks, and Hollies (who took his name) but also, because he was a phenomenon in his time. He didn't look like a rock and roll idol; he was more acceptable to parents than his own idol, Elvis, yet he was a major influence on the rock and roll movement. Although he said that seeing Elvis changed his style forever, he never really adopted the raw sexuality that Elvis made famous.

The story of Elvis is well documented. He was the consummate idol of the fifties and the person later rock stars would strive to be bigger than. Only the Beatles would be. Elvis was the revolutionary force that really took rock and roll outside of the American mainstream and made the break with parental control complete. It was said of Elvis that when people heard his records they couldn't tell if he was black or white. When he appeared on the "Ed Sullivan Show" his movements were so blatantly sexual that the cameramen were ordered to show him only from the waist up. He was, in fact, the answer to Sam Phillips' dreams. Sam Phillips was the owner of the "Memphis Recording Service" for Negro singers who had no place to go. In his heart he knew black artists were limited in their ability for lasting fame with the primarily white consumers of rock and roll. So he wished he could find a white man with the black sound. He found that man in Elvis Presley and the rest is history.

The importance of these people and their music was that they were able to verbalize the feelings of teenagers in the fifties and unify them in their rebellion against the status quo. And yet, in the end, rock and roll would be controlled, toned down, and in its final form become unacceptable to teenagers. This was the result of a string of coincidences that enabled record companies to clean up and control rock and roll. It might never have happened were it not for the deaths of Buddy Holly, Richie Valens, and the Big Bopper in the same plane crash; the drafting of Elvis; the arrest of Chuck Berry; the rejection of Jerry Lee Lewis for marrying his young cousin; and the loss of Little Richard to religion. With all the major stars gone or neutralized, rock and roll was brought under control and made more acceptable to parents. Memory, however, is a powerful thing. The images and impressions these musical greats had burned into the minds and souls of teenagers would not only resurface in the music of the sixties, but those who had been teens would be college age and together with the sixties, teens would once again break away from mainstream American culture and develop a

counter-culture of their own.

## **Part Two: *The Folk Revival and the Civil Rights Movement***

In the early sixties, rock and roll as a form for rebellion was dead. “Schlock Rock,” formula songs with carefully cultivated teen idols like Fabian, Tommy Sands, Pat Boone, Neil Sedaka, and Frankie Avalon, had taken its place. Even the black sound that would later resurface as “Soul” was formulated and promoted by Motown Records. (Nonetheless, the true soul of such greats as Ray Charles and B.B. King *would* influence people like James Brown, Wilson Pickett, and Sly and the Family Stone. Much later it would also influence Jimmy Hendrix and Janis Joplin.)

The teens of the fifties had become the college age generation of the sixties. They were not at all happy with the world their parents were preparing to pass on to them. They were to be a group for whom awareness and consciousness raising were the primary goals in life. They sought not just to live life but to experience it in every sense. They cringed at the injustices they saw particularly in the Civil Rights Movement and later in the Vietnam War. Most of all they had that heady belief that is a part of being young—they believed they had the power to change things, to make them better. They reached back in their search for expression to a very old, very American grassroots form of protest: the folksong.

The folk song had been used for many years as a medium for telling stories, making social commentary, and communicating the hopes and concerns of people. They were easy to play, requiring just a rudimentary grasp of music and an acoustic guitar. The messages they delivered were timeless so it was not surprising that they would appeal to college age people who had lost the ability to identify with or express themselves through rock and roll.

In the early sixties a young man from a small town in Minnesota, changed his name to Bob Dylan, packed his bags and headed off to Greenwich Village, the beat center of New York City. It was a place he could thrive in and within reach of one of folk music’s legends, Woody Guthrie. Bob Dylan was a natural folk singer who idolized Guthrie. His early works are greatly influenced by Guthrie. Dylan would become one of the most important singer/songwriters of the times. He would also outgrow the simple folksong as the times did too. He would pioneer a new blend which came to be known as folk-rock.

In the early sixties though, the simple folk song had its place. It had always been associated with various forms of protest such as labor movements and poor peoples protest so it was not surprising that the old folk song “We Shall Overcome” became the anthem of the Civil Rights Movement. This simple song contained no threats, no warnings of violent overthrows, just an unshakeable belief that “we shall overcome someday.”

Indeed, this was the mood of the early sixties. The promise of a new frontier for the American people. The challenge of J.F.K. was to the youth of our nation to get involved. There was an underlying feeling that things that were wrong could be righted, if only enough people were made aware. “Folk protest, while rejecting certain bourgeois norms, remained within the social structure, sought but did not offer solutions, and did not attempt to break loose.”<sup>6</sup>

Therefore as you’re teaching about the inequalities that existed racially and economically you find songs such as Dylan’s “Blowin’ in the Wind” or “Yellow is the Color” poignant aids in communicating the feelings of the times. When Peter, Paul and Mary sang “If I had a Hammer” their intent was not to smash the system but to “hammer out justice/hammer out freedom/hammer out love between my brothers and sisters all over this land.” Phil Ochs “There But for Fortune” points out examples like “the prisoner who’s life has gone stale” and

doesn't have the solution but rather says "there but for fortune go you/go I/you or I." The almost religious reference to hope, fate and the wish for justice are timeless themes which appear over and over in the early songs of the movement. The songs offer hope, pointed out sufferings and questioned the way things were. The song "All My Trials" paints a life of bitter disappointment and sorrow yet offers the only things that gives people the courage to go on, the belief that "all my trials Lord/soon be over."

The folk revival brought with it the return to music as a medium for communicating a message. Songwriters such as Bob Dylan, Pete Seeger, Tom Paxton and Woody Guthrie catalogued the times in their songs. People like Odetta, Buffy St. Marie, Joan Baez, Richie Havens, and Peter, Paul and Mary helped carry the message to the primarily older, college age portion of the youth movement. This was the segment that was more politically active. They appreciated folk music, intellectualized it and believed that if everyone worked together things could change— nonviolently. This view parallels that of Martin Luther King and the non-violent portion of the Civil Rights Movement. Nineteen-sixty-three was a year that radically changed the mood of the entire country. The Kennedy assassination left the country in shock, the optimism disappeared and the question of violence as a means of change brought mixed responses. Bob Dylan really seemed to have captured the mood with his song "The Times They Are A Changin'." When he invited: "Come gather around people wherever you roam / and admit that the waters around you have grown / and accept it that soon you'll be drenched to the bone / if your time to you is worth savin' / then you'd better start swimmin; or you'll sink like a stone / For the times / they are a changin'," he was issuing more than just an invitation. This song had a foreboding tone to it. In his remaining verses he makes it clear that it is up to the youth of this country to change things. The success of that song pushed Dylan to the front of the folk-protest movement. But shortly after two things were going to alter Dylan's role. The first was Bob Dylan's decision that politics were not worthwhile and that a person had to change as an individual before he could change the world. The second was the British Invasion led by the Beatles. Dylan was not the only musician affected by the Beatles arrival. Prior to their arrival in 1964, an American group, the Beach Boys had parlayed clean harmonies with simple lyrics about surf, girls and cars to create the fantasy known as the California Myth. The popularity of the Beach Boys made California the rock capital of the nation. It also contributed to the further alienation of youth from the reality of life that mainstream America offered.

### **Part Three: *Origins of the Counterculture of Youth***

Some of the most prized values of the group which came to be thought of as the counterculture were a deep respect for freedom and individual integrity, and a faithfulness to experience and pleasure. The music of the Beach Boys spoke to these needs and created a fantasy for them to exist in. But even the Beach Boys could not shatter the air of despair that held the country after the Kennedy Assassination. Something new, old, different yet the same was needed. That something was the Beatles.

The Beatles revived much of the early rock and roll sound of Chuck Berry, Buddy Holly and Elvis in a new exciting way. Their wittiness and unabashed faith in themselves reaffirmed young people's beliefs in themselves as well. The Beatles represented a complete and entirely "youthful change in clothes, hair styles, social customs and music." They re-established rock music as the unifying force of the youth movement.

The arrival of the Beatles has been called a "pop explosion." According to Greil Marcus in *The Rolling Stone Illustrated History of Rock and Roll*, "a pop explosion is an irresistible cultural explosion that cuts across lines of class and race, and most crucially, divides society itself by age. The energy for that explosion comes from a deep but unfocused unrest in Society, usually felt in the general rebelliousness of youth. Enormous energy finds a object in a pop explosion and that energy is focused on, organized by, and released by a single,



holistic, cultural entity.”<sup>7</sup>

The Beatles led the way for other British groups and fads to flood the American market. Initially their popularity can be traced in large part to their optimistic view of life. However this quality was not what gave the Beatles their staying power through all the tumultuous times that followed. They were however, able to reflect the times and more importantly, the feelings of youth during those times.

Whereas the Beach Boys made an important contribution to the development of the counterculture, they failed to reflect the changing attitudes of youth as they saw America becoming more involved in Vietnam and less responsive to their needs and concerns.

Artists such as Jimi Hendrix in “If Six Was Nine” spoke to the need to be individuals and reject the values of the establishment. Bob Dylan’s “Like a Rolling Stone” illustrates the ideal alienated individual. Other groups such as the Doors, Who, Kinks, and the Rolling Stones epitomized the mood of alienation that was prevalent at this time. No longer were young people feeling society had shut them out, rather they felt united in their decision to reject society and as a community of youth, share their own values.

#### **Part Four: *The Anti War Movement***

This feeling of united alienation was further heightened by our country’s growing involvement in the Vietnam War. The War deepened and widened the chasm between the counterculture and the establishment.

The Youth International Party (Yippies), the SDS, Eugene McCarthy, student strikes, marches, protests and riots became outgrowths of the terribly strong feelings against the war.

Once again the music gave them the means by which to immortalize the feelings better than any monument could. Once more Dylan’s pen was a mighty sword as he wrote “Masters of War” and “With God on Our Side” both of which sharply condemned those who hid behind a respectable facade while setting in motion the death machines of war. Jefferson Airplane’s album “Volunteers” in 1969 culminated a year (1968) which saw two more assassinations (R. Kennedy and M. L. King), the Tet offensive and the war in the streets of Chicago, U.S.A. during the Democratic National Convention.

While the Airplane felt a revolution was imminent, other singers followed Dylan’s lead in recording songs such as: Phil Ochs “I Ain’t Marching Anymore” and “Is There Anybody Here,” Barry McGuire’s “The Eve of Destruction,” Buffy Ste. Marie’s “The Universal Soldier,” and John Lennon’s “All We Are Saying is Give Peace a Chance.”

The violence grew in direct proportion to the realization that not only were individuals powerless to stop the war, groups were as well. It became clear that only the President would stop it when he decided he was ready to. The realization caused many people to give up on the American political system as absurd and insane. This feeling that the system was insane reaffirmed the countercultures’ sanity and therefore validated their ideas. Some groups responded to this through black humor such as Country Joe and the Fish in their song “I-Feel-Like ‘I’m-Fixin’ To-Die-Rag.” One verse cajoled: “Come on Mothers throughout the land / Pack off your boys to Vietnam / Come on Fathers, don’t hesitate / Send your sons off before its too late / Be the first ones on your block / to have your boy come home in a box.” Other groups such as the Jefferson Airplane preached a complete replacement of the American System as the only answer to the craziness.

Although it seemed for a while that that revolution was indeed around the corner, it never materialized.

Besides being too beset with fractures within the movement, youth made a strategic mistake when it counted on rock music to help create that revolution. Just as in the fifties rock and roll was neutralized and controlled by the industry that had helped spawn it so too would the establishment be in a position to neutralize and cause the demise of enough of the counterculture to weaken and disable its potential for power.

How sadly ironic that the very establishment that was being rejected by the counterculture was needed by them to popularize their music and could be the force that obliterated the legitimacy of large portions of that culture just by making them acceptable to the general masses (thereby giving such movements as the hippies, the appearance of a fad).

The realizations were too much for the counterculture to cope with unaided. Thus began the widespread acceptance of the belief that society was sick and needed to be completely changed. However it was now pretty apparent that the counterculture would not be able to affect that change. The only answer was escape.

### **Part Five: *The Counterculture and Drugs***

There were only two viable means for escaping the depressing reality of mainstream American society: death and drugs. In overwhelming numbers, the counterculture turned to the latter. Drugs became the new way youth could sustain its optimistic hope for change. They allowed not only an escape from the harsh realities of life but an unprecedented opportunity for self exploration.

Drugs were not entirely new to the youth movement. They had been experimented with and even disguised in songs such as Dylan's "Mr. Tambourine Man" and the Association's "Along Comes Mary" earlier in the sixties. The increased popularity of all kinds of drugs further expanded the gap between the generations in the 60's. Drug use enjoyed a very positive image in the late sixties. It represented the ultimate freedom to do whatever felt good.

By 1967 song writers had responded to this new wave of drug popularity with "psychedelic" music. Jimi Hendrix's "Purple Haze," the Beatles "Sgt. Peppers" album, Jefferson Airplane's "Surrealistic Pillow" and the Cream's "Disreali Gears" are but a few of the albums that attempted to recreate the LSD experience.

All over America stoned or flipped out young people closed their eyes, turned up their stereo's and heard people like John Lennon tell them to: "Picture yourself on a boat on a river / with plasticine trees and marmalade skies. . ." or Jim Hendrix ask: "Are you experienced"? The drug experience particularly the mind expanding ones like LSD, mescaline, peyote and other sacred mushrooms gave youth a feeling of power that mainstream society denied them.

Not all drug songs were of the mind expanding variety. In 1965 Dave Van Ronk, a folksinger from Greenwich Village sang about "Cocaine (Going All Around My Brain)," Sly and the Family Stone offered to "take you higher" presumably via smoke; the Rolling Stones mocked acceptable mainstream abuse of prescription drugs in "Mother's Little Helper" and Steppenwolf promised a "Magic Carpet Ride" to any little girl who was interested.

The issue of drugs not only broadened the gap between youth and the establishment, it solidified the young's sense of belonging to their own community. This youth community questioned everything society held sacred so it was not surprising that even the love songs of this period would illustrate a change in attitude.

In the 50's and early 60's people in songs lost their loves, had broken hearts, were lonely and were often traumatized by the love experience. From the mid 60's on, that all changed. Again, the leading group to



establish this change was the Beatles. In 1965 they released an album “Help” that was the soundtrack to a movie by the same name. Songs from that album like “The Night Before,” “Help” and “Ticket to Ride” showed that love was a matter of choice, need not be permanent and that women also had feelings about relationships. A new group “The Mamas and the Papas” explored this new love song on their album “If You Can Believe Your Eyes and Ears.” Male/female relationships were further explored in songs like “Different Drum,” “A Man and a Women,” “Honky Tonk Woman,” “Both Sides Now” and “I Can’t See You Anymore.”

Since sex is a natural part of male/female relationships it also became a subject for songs such as the Troggs’ “Wild Thing,” the Doors’ “Light My Fire,” Jimi Hendrix’s “Fire” and “Foxy Lady” and the Stones’ “Let’s Spend the Night Together.” Although media attention to these songs served to make them further issues of the generation gap, these songs did serve to loosen America’s norms regarding male/female relationships. They also helped people to reevaluate their feelings about relationships and promote greater equality in relationships between the sexes.

### **Part Six: *Two Festival s— Woodstock and Altamont***

Nineteen-sixty-nine was another landmark year in the 60’s. The Beatles broke up and decided to pursue their own interests. Bob Dylan returned to the “Nashville Skyline” and his own interests. Jefferson Airplane was wracked with internal havoc. The SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) split into four groups, each bent on pursuing its own interests. So it seemed that, just as in the late fifties, parents would triumph over evil (youth) again and everyone could get on with life.

Then came summer and 300,000 to 500,000 of the unsinkable youth culture showed they weren’t through yet by turning a farmer named Yasgur into the proud owner of a new nation: The Woodstock Nation. Originally scheduled as a three day music festival where people could hear the best groups of their generation for a price, the promoters realized they’d attracted an uncontrollably huge crowd and proclaimed it a free concert.

Despite everyone’s fears, all went quite well all things considered. The festival did feature the most popular groups of the 60’s and some new groups like Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young got together as a result of the festival.

For the establishment, particularly parents, the weekend was a nightmare. Not only did the kids get along well, they shared everything including drugs, sex, sleeping and bathing facilities. There was a lot of love at Woodstock; it seemed the culmination of the best of what the counterculture had stood for. It was also sad because it truly was the last great gathering of the youth movement. Both a movie and a soundtrack were made of the Festival and except for memories, they are all that remains.

Because Woodstock went so well, there has been the temptation to recreate it. Several others have tried and failed in different degrees. One of the most tragic failures occurred in December of 1969.

The Rolling Stones decided to give a free concert at Altamont Raceway in California. The concert would feature several groups but the main feature would be the Stones. At the last minute, the Stones decided to hire the Hell’s Angels for security guards at the concert and pay them for their services with beer. Altamont turned out to be the name associated with violence just as Woodstock is with love. Not only did everything that could go wrong, go wrong but it too was all preserved and captured on tape. The concert was riddled with ironies but the most unreal one came as Mick Jagger watched horrified while the Angels murdered Meridith Hunter for insulting one of them as Jagger sang “Sympathy for the Devil”.

The two festivals, Woodstock and Altamont are a fitting ending to this unit on the music of the 60's. They illustrated all the counterculture hoped to be as well as all it could be. Perhaps they gave the counterculture much to ponder because the movement turned into itself and eventually assimilated into mainstream America.

Now there are historic accounts available in books, newspapers, and magazines or for a quarter a play; on WAPP on your FM dial; in private collections or record shops you can listen to the most vivid, valid histories on record: the music.

## Notes

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1. David Pichaske. *A Generation in Motion* , (N.Y. Schimer Books, 1979) p. xix.
2. Gordon. "Images of America in the Rock Music of the 1960's", Peter (Senior essay, Department of History, Yale University, 1981) p.2
3. Kenneth Kenniston. *Youth and Dissent*, (N.Y. Harcourt, Brace and Jovanoich, 1971), p. 6-9
4. Ralph Gleason, "Rolling Stone Magazine" April 10, 1968, p. 10.
5. Don J. Hibbard, Ph.D and Carol Kaleialoha, *The Roll of Rock* (N.J. Prentice Hall, Inc., 1983), P. 15.
6. Ibid., p. 30
7. Griel, Marcus. *The Rolling Stone Illustrated History of Rock and Roll* , (N.Y. 1976), p. 174.

**First Lesson Plan: To be taught in conjunction with the counter-culture**

***Purpose To explore the feeling of alienation.***

***Objective To examine some causes of alienation i.e. styles of dress, social conditions, personal choices, and be able to verbalize feelings about alienation.***

***Strategy Begin by discussing and developing a definition for the word "alien". Some responses might be: Someone from another place; a place much different from what we are accustomed to or perhaps another planet. Perhaps some of them have seen "The Alien". Now you have one extreme view of what it might mean to be an alien.***

Next expand the discussion to include "alienated" and "alienation". To help them to develop and understanding of the relationship between alienated or alienation and "feeling cut off" or "feeling apart" ask questions such as:

1. What kinds of things could happen to you that would make you feel left out or alienated from your friends?
2. Is it important to you to have the newest styles of clothes, hair, etc.?
3. What do you think of people who don't dress or do the things you do?
4. Would you date or have as your friend someone who everyone thought was "weird" because of their appearance?
5. Can there ever be a reason for using your appearance to make a statement about your lifestyle?
6. Look at these pictures (show greasers, hippies, punk rockers, collegiates, people from various religious sects, etc.) How does their appearance make a difference in how people act around them?

#### *Some Follow-up Activities*

1. Split the class into the 50's and 60's. Have them act out and dress a role from their particular decade.
2. Ask for volunteers to pick a style from the 60's or 50's and live it for a day, then report back people's reactions to them.

#### **Second Lesson Plan: To be taught in conjunction with the Anti-War Movement**

***Purpose To examine songs as a form of social commentary.***

***Objective Upon completing this lesson the students will be able to recognize the message that is being conveyed through a song and discuss its significance.***

#### ***Strategy***

1. Have the students listen to the lyrics of:
  - "The Universal Soldier" by Buffy Ste. Marie
  - "Eve of Destruction" by Barry McGuire
  - "Is there Anybody Here" by Phil Ochs
  - "Masters of War" by Bob Dylan
  - "With God on Our Side" by Bob Dylan
  - "I Ain't Marching Anymore" by Phil Ochs
  - and "The I Feel Like I'm Fixin' to Die Rag"

by Country Joe and the Fish.

Discuss the words, tone and melody of the songs. Have the students discuss their feelings about what the songs were trying to say.

2. Compare the tone and lyrics of these songs:

“Man of Constant sorrows” by Peter, Paul, and Mary “Blowing in the Wind” by Peter, Paul, and Mary or Bob Dylan.

“We Shall Overcome” by Buffy Ste Marie

3. Ask the students to recall what events had occurred from the time the second set of songs was popular (early 60's) to when the first set of songs was popular (mid 60's).

***Outcome The students should be able to recognize that the songs from the second set have an optimistic, questioning tone; a quiet underlying hope for change in a non-violent way. The songs in the original set are all of a desperate foreboding nature. There is a great deal of pessimism and cynicism about war. The turning point can be illustrated by using the lyrics to Dylan's “The Times they are a Changin’ ”***

**Third Lesson Plan: To be used in conjunction with the counterculture and drugs**

***Purpose To illustrate the versatility of music as a means for creating a mood or tone.***

***Objective To cultivate an awareness of the role each instrument (including the voice) has in creating a mood or setting the tone of a musical experience.***

***Strategy Before playing any music, discuss with the class how music makes them feel. In this way you can find out how aware they are of the different moods music can evoke. Ask if any of them have ever felt fearful from listening to music. They will probably all say of course not. Tell them that today you are going to play different musical pieces and you want them to listen carefully and place them in a category that matches the way the music makes them feel.***

You can either develop your own categories, let the students develop them or try these: *happy , sad , fearful , thoughtful , powerful , free , like I'm dreaming .*

They are to listen, decide and write the word(s) that best describe the way the music makes them feel next to the number of the selection you play. Don't tell them the names of the selections in advance just play them.

Some suggested pieces are:

1. The theme from "Jaws"
2. The theme from "Happy Days"
3. "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child"
4. "Surf City"
5. "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds"
6. "Purple Haze"
7. "We Shall Overcome"
8. "If I had a Hammer"
9. "Magic Carpet Ride"
10. "The Eve of Destruction"
11. "I Can't See You Anymore"
12. The theme from "Rocky"

Go back over their feelings with them and try to have them identify what part(s) of the songs made them feel the way they did.

Optional additional activity to follow-up with: Use a darkened room, a strobe light and a black light. Play selections from the Cream's "Disreali Gears", Jefferson Airplane's "Surrealistic Pillow" or Jim Hendrix's; "Are You Experienced" albums. Discuss how the atmosphere and the music blended to create a psychedelic experience.

#### *Movies to Illustrate the Times*

Below are some movies which you may be able to rent very cheaply (\$1.50-\$3.00) from a Video shop. If you have or can gain access to a VCR they would give both you and your students a vivid picture of the attitudes and events of the times. This is not intended to be a complete list.

American Graffiti	(50's)
Beach Blanket Bingo	(50's)
Grease	(50's)
Help!	(Beatles)
Yellow Submarine	(Beatles—Drugs)
The Graduate	(60's)
Woodstock	(The Festival)
Gimme Shelter	(Altamont)
Coming Home	(Vietnam)
The Deer Hunter	(Vietnam)
Tommy	(60's Rock Opera)
Blackboard Jungle	(50's)
Jesus Christ, Superstar	(60's)
Hair	(60's)

### **The Roots of Rock Music: An Explanation of the Terms**

1. Pop—Music that was popular in the 40's—"standards", formula music that tranquilized the white audience it was popular with. Such artists such as Frank Sinatra, Bing Crosby, Dean Martin and Les Paul and Mary Ford. Some later artists were influenced by some of this music. Also the giant music labels such as Columbia, and RCA, and Capitol were part of this establishment.
2. Blues/Gospel—Blues was music that was earthy, frank, unpretentious; songs told of life's seamier side; lots of moaning etc. Some blues singers sing gospel and some gospel singers sing blues but gospel fans do not cross over. Gospel is spiritual moving music varying emotionally from great joy to unbearable sadness. Definitely an important influence on R & R as well as later true soul music.
3. Country/Western—Music originating primarily in the South—white man's blues without the irony found in black blues. Subject matter ranges from life's problems to patriotism and religion. Very straight and sincere. . . Lyrics can be depressing. Definite influence on R & R especially the instrumental parts.
4. Rhythm and Blues—Often called a mix of jump, jazz, and gospel with a bit of blues. This music is sometimes called the first rock and roll because of frantic beat, shouting singers, up front loud sax but the music itself was more complex and jazz oriented to be simple rock and roll.
5. Early Rock Pioneers—Flamboyant music, wild shouting performances driving uncompromising beat, some frankly suggestive performances, drawing on R & B and Gospel.
6. Rockabilly—White boys singing blues—revolutionary music—wild jived up country music. "All shook up"—Whole Lotta Shakin' Going On"—This is what 50's parents were against.
7. Doo Wop: Streetcorner Soul—heavy harmonizing all vocal acapella singers—both black and white—heavy draw on gospel sound.
8. Schlock Rock—Rock and roll parents approved of; toned down, formula music for manufactured teen idols.
9. Folk—One of the oldest forms of protest—simple musically often played on an acoustic guitar. A combination of blues, gospel and talking stories. Under Dylan's pen it was revived and utilized as a popular means of social commentary.



10. California Myth—Surf music originating with Brian Wilson of the Beach Boys. Clean harmonies perpetuated the fantasy of endless summer; golden life in California.
11. British Invasion—Music that drew heavily from American heritage of R & B, R & R etc. but updated and fresh sounding. Led by the Beatles; music that became revolutionary
12. Folk Rock—The result of the Beatles influence on primarily folk artists like Dylan. This form allowed folk to express the changing mood of the mid—60's more accurately.
13. Early Soul—often thought of as black teen music of the 60's and 70's—its artists combine screaming, rapping, funk and jams. True Soul artists like James Brown never received large white audience appeal. Later this sound would become Motown, music formulated to cross over and appeal to all of young America.
14. Hippie Music: Not meant for dancing—mental music—psychedelic—mind music. Utilizing past forms and expanding into bold new ones that often bombarded the listener with vivid sounds and images.
15. Country-Natural Rock—Post drug era—idyllic optimistic blend—easier on the ear and mind. Woodstock and post Woodstock style music.

## Discography

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The records listed below provide us with a good sampling of the music that accurately reflected the times.

Elvis Presley, *The Sun Sessions* (Sun Records 1954-1955) Songs that first made Elvis famous.

Little Richard, "Good Golly Miss Molly" (Specialty 1958)

Bill Haley, *Golden Hits* (MCA 1955)

Fats Domino, "Blueberry Hill" (Imperial 1956)

Little Richard, "Tutti Frutti" (Specialty 1955), "Good Golly Miss Molly" (Specialty, 1958)

Chuck Berry, "School Day" (Chess, 1957), "Sweet Little Sixteen", (Chess, 1958)

Jerry Lee Lewis, "Whole Lotta Shakin' Going On" (Sun, 1957)  
 The Everly Bros., "Wake Up Little Suzie" (Cadence, 1957)  
 Buddy Holly, "Peggy Sue" (Coral, 1957)  
 Pat Boone, "Love Letters in the Sand" (Dot, 1957)  
 Ricky Nelson, "Travelin' Man" b/w "Hello Marylou" (Imperial, 1961)  
 Paul Anka, "Diana" (ABC—Paramount, 1957)  
 Frankie Avalon, "Venus" (Chancellor, 1959)  
 Ray Charles, "I've Got a Woman" (Atlantic, 1955)  
 Neil Sedaka "Calendar Girl" (RCA Victor, 1960)  
 James Brown, "Please, Please, Please" (Federal, 1956)  
 Beach Boys, *Surfin Safari* (Capitol, 1962)  
     *Little Dance Coupe* (Capitol, 1963)  
     *Pet Sounds* (Capitol, 1966)  
 Bob Dylan, *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan*, (Columbia, 1963)  
     *The Times They Are a Changin'*  (Columbia, 1963)  
     *Nashville Skyline* (Columbia, 1969)  
 The Beatles, *Meet the Beatles* , (Capitol, 1964)  
     *The Beatles Second Album* , (Capitol, 1964)  
     *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club and Band* (Capitol 1967)  
 Phil Ochs, *Outside of a Small Circle of Friends* , (Elektra, 1969)  
     *Chords of Fame* , ( A & M, 1974)  
     *I Ain't Marchin' Anymore* , (Elektra, 1969)  
 Dave, Van Ronk, *Dave Van Ronk* , (Columbia, 1965)  
 Peter, Paul, and Mary, *The Best of* (Warner, 1968)  
 Joan Baez, *Greatest Hits* , (Vanguard, 1968)  
 Odetta, *Essential* , (Vanguard)  
 Buffy Ste. Marie, *Best of . . .* (Vanguard)  
*We Shall Overcome* , (Columbia)  
 Barry McGuire, "The Eve of Destruction" (1965)  
 Country Joe and the Fish, "I Feel Like I'm Fixing to Die Rag", (Vanguard, 1967)  
 Jefferson Airplane, *Jefferson Airplane Takes Off* , (RCA Victor, 1966)  
     *Surrealistic Pillow* , (RCA Victor, 1967)  
     *Volunteers* , (RCA Victor, 1969)  
 Jimi Hendrix, *Are you Experienced ?* (Reprise, 1967)  
 Cream, *Disreali Gears* , (1967)  
     *Best of Cream* , (1969)  
 The Doors, *Strange Days* , (Elektra, 1967)  
     *Thirteen* , (Elektra, 1970)  
 The Who, *The Who Sings My Generation* , (Decca, 1966)  
     *Tommy* , (Decca, 1969)  
 The Kinks, *Greatest Hits* , (Reprise)  
 The Rolling Stones, *Big Hits: High Tide and Green Grasses* (London)  
     *Hot Rocks* , (London, 1972)  
 Steppenwolf, *16 Greatest Hits* , (MCA)  
 Iron Butterfly, "In-a-Gadda-da-Vida", (Atco)  
 Sly and the Family Stone, *Greatest Hits* , (Epic, 1970)

The Mamas and the Pappas, *If You Can Believe Your Eyes and Ears* , (Dunhill)  
The Lovin' Spoonful, " *What a Day for a Daydream* " (1965)  
John Lennon, "Give Peace a Chance", (1969)  
Sound tracks from the movies: "Woodstock" and "Gimme Shelter"

## Annotated Bibliography for Teachers

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Belz, Xarl. *The Story of Rock* . New York: Harper Colophon Books, 2nd ed., 1972.

In this book Belz explores rock music as a folk art rather than a popular art. An interesting perspective, this book is better viewed as a companion to other sources.

Brackman, Jacob. "Shock Waves from the Baby Boon" *Esquire* . June 1983. Vol. 99 No. 6, p. 197.

Brackman attempts to sort out and make sense out of the tumultuous feelings of politically active socially aware under 25 set during the 60's.

Carr, Roy and Tyler, Tony. *The Beatles : An Illustrated Record* . New York: Harmony Books, 1978.

This book provides a good insight into the Beatles via their recordings and appearances. Lots of memorabilia.

Clark, Dick and Robinson, Richard. *Rock, Roll and Remember* . New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1976.

Dick Clark writes his memoirs of the early days of rock and roll and American Bandstand. Very light but informative reading.

Cohn, Nik. *Rock from the Beginning* . New York: Stein and Day, 1983, Vol. 99, No. 6, p. 237.

A study of the development of rock and roll from a British point of view.

Cowan, Paul and Geoffrey. "Letters from Mississippi". *Esquire* . June 1983, Vol. 99, No. 6, p. 237

A good article on the beginning of white college students involvement in the Civil Rights Movement.

Eisen, Jonathan. *Altamont* , New York: Avon, 1970.

A collection of essays about the final and tragic rock festival of the 60's. The book expresses the disillusionment that was becoming evident at this time.

Herr, Michael. "Sending the War Home" *Esquire* , June 1983, Vol. 99, No. 6, p. 265.

An enlightening article on the role played by correspondents during the Vietnam War.

Hibbard, Don J. and Kaleialoha, Carol. *The Role of Rock* . New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1983.

Very good reference book on the role rock music played in the lives of its audience. Very helpful also a good reference book for other readings and additional music.

Hodgson, Godfrey. *America in Our Times* . New York: Vintage Books, 1976. A very good general history of the times from the 40's through the Nixon years. Excellent background book to aid in framing the times.

Holmes, John Clellon. "The Philosophy of the Beats" *Esquire* , June 1983, Vol. 99, No. 6, p. 158.

A look at the people of the late 50's who were often called rebels without a cause.

Junker, Howard. "As We Used to Say in the 50's" *Esquire* , June 1983, Vol. 99, No. 6, p. 179.

Very entertaining review of the slang that was popular back then. Probably an eye opener for today's students.

Kenniston, Kenneth. *Youth and Dissent* . New York: Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich, 1971.

An important work from a man who devoted a great deal of time to studying the group that came to be called youth in the 60's. A good source of information on the reasons for the counterculture.

Kunan, James Simon. "The Leaflet Wars" *Esquire* . June 1983, Vol. 99, No. 6, p. 281.

A very good article on how and why the leaflet became an important a tool of the counterculture.

Lane, Cherry and Knopf, Alfred A. *The Songs of Bob Dylan from 1966 to 1975* . New York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc., 1976.

An anthology of music and lyrics that may be very helpful in discussing Dylan.

Leaf, David. *The Beach Boys and the California Myth* . New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1978.

An excellent aid in exploring the California Myth, how the Beach Boys created it unintentionally and the effect it had on them.

Luce, John. "The Last Bad Days of Haight-Ashbury" *Esquire* . June 1983, Vol. 99, No. 6, p. 251.

An accurate account of the fall of the Haight from it's heyday as a hippie haven to it's media inspired fall to commercialism.

Miller, Jim. *The Rolling Stone Illustrated History of Rock and Roll* . New York: Random House, 1980.

Probably the best source for a complete history of rock and roll right up through the 70's. Lots of good background information, illustrations, and discographies.

Morgan, Thomas B. "The Adoration of Frankie, Ricky and Kookie" *Esquire* , June 1983, Vol. 99, No. 6, p. 184.

A good article on the new teen idols that made rock and roll safe and acceptable to parents.

Obst, Lynda Rosen. *The Sixties* . New York: Random House/Rolling Stone, 1977.

Primarily a pictorial guide to the decade accompanied by short articles.

Okun, Milton. *Great Songs of the Sixties* . New York: Quadrangle/The N.Y. Times Book Co., 1970.

A diverse anthology of songs from the 60's accompanied by an interesting summary of the times.

O'Neil, Wm. *Coming Apart* . Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1971.

Also an excellent general source on the history of the 60's.

Pichaske, David. *A Generation in Motion: Popular Music and Culture in the Sixties* . New York: Schimer Books

1979.

A book I leaned heavily on as the best source of the role the music played in the events of the sixties. Well written with lots of lyrics and pictures.

Scaduto, Anthony. *Bob Dylan* . New York: W. H. Allen, 1972.

Probably the best of the many books written on Bob Dylan. The best one to read for a clear insight into the man and his music.

Schaffner, Nicolas. *The Beatles Forever* . Harrisburg, Pa.: Cameron House, 1977.

A very well written study of the Beatles, their impact on the times and the reasons for the impact. Very well illustrated.

Spitz, Robert Stephan. *Barefoot in Babylon* . New York: Viking Press, 1979. The story of the creation of the Woodstock Festival.

Steinham, Gloria. "The Moral Disarmament of Betty Coed" *Esquire* , June 1983, Vol. 99, No. 6, p. 243.

The story of the effect birth control pills had on young women and sexual relationships in the 60's.

Thompson, Toby. *An Unorthodox View of Bob Dylan : Positively Main Street* . New York: Coward-McCann, 1971.

A rather strange biography of Dylan by a man who has never met him but has always wanted to.

Tobler, John. *The Beach Boys* . New Jersey: Chartwell Books, 1978.

An interesting account of their lives including their involvement with Charles Manson. Fairly well illustrated but without captions for the most part.

Wolfe, Tom. *Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* . New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1968.

Not for the faint of heart, the book provides an off beat yet vivid account of psychedelic times.

## **Suggested Readings for Students**

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Carr, Roy and Tyler, Tony. *The Beatles: An Illustrated Record* . New York: Harmony Books, 1978.

A fascinating book for students; filled with stories and memorabilia on the Beatles.

Clark, Dick and Robinson, Richard. *Rock, Roll and Remember* . New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1976.

A good insight on the origins of a show that can still be seen today, American Bandstand; its origins as well as its growing pains.

Hibbard, Don J. and Kaleialoha Carol. *The Role of Rock* . New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc. 1983



A good reference work on the role the music played in the lives of its audience. Also contains a very good bibliography and discography.

Leaf, David. *The Beach Boys and the California Myth* . New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1978.

Great background on the myth and its originators as well as the results of the myth. A must for Beach Boy fans.

Miller, Jim. *The Rolling Stone Illustrated History of Rock and Roll* . New York: Random House, 1980.

A very absorbing thorough history of just about anyone who was anyone, including a famous Do-Wop group from Hillhouse High School. Lots of pictures and a great discography.

Obst, Lynda Rosen. *The Sixties* . New York: Random House / Rolling Stone, 1977.

A pictorial guide to the 60's with some interesting brief written accounts of the times.

Pichaske, David. *A Generation in Motion: Popular Music and Culture in the Sixties* . New York: Schiner Books, 1979.

This book ties the music and the events of the sixties together. It uses lyrical quotes and pictures very effectively to bring out the importance of the music.

Schaffner, Nicolas. *The Beatles Forever* . Harrisburg, Pa.: Cameron House, 1977.

A very well illustrated account of the impact The Beatles had on the 60's.

Scaduto, Anthony. *Bob Dylan* New York: W. H. Allen, 1972.

The best biography of Dylan to date. A must for anyone who wants to understand one of the most powerful singer/songwriters of the 60's.

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