

**Crayons to Perfume:
The Loss of Innocence in Poetry and Music of the Sixties**

Myron Greenfield

INTRODUCTORY DISCUSSION

If the decade of the 1950s was the womb, the 1960s was the ice-cold, sharp reality of the stainless surgical steel delivery room. The 1960s was a sharp contrast to the plain-vanilla, black and white decade of the 50s. The 50s served the purpose to envelope and shelter from the greatest war man had ever known. The 60s was the decade in which we awakened from our collective amnesia and began to see the world in its stark reality.

From drive-in movies and drive-in hamburger shops serviced by beautiful roller-skating high school honeys in the 50s, to fractious race riots, war protests and campus uprisings, the 60s would be the decade we lost our innocence for the last time.

“From Crayons to Perfume” refers to a lyric from the theme song from “To Sir With Love,” a benchmark of 1960s school cinema. No matter who we were, no matter where we lived, we began the decade with crayons, and finished it wearing perfume. We grew up, whether we wanted to or not.

The curriculum unit is geared for high school juniors and will span a period of three or more weeks in classes which meet 90-minutes per day in the traditional block schedule. The “theme” is loss of innocence, and the blatant realities which defined the decade. Through a variety of voices - poetry as well as prose - music and lyrics - the students will audibly hear the pain, frustration and irreverence of the decade.

The students will grasp the fundamentals of poetry, both structure and substance. Through class readings and guided discussions, group projects and presentations, the students will maneuver the obstacle course of sometimes strong (sometimes expurgated) language, while trying to comprehend the words of some of the decade’s most prolific and prominent voices.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION: If the 40s were known by the battle fields of Europe and the South Pacific, and the 50s were known for Lovers Lane and Blueberry Hill, the 60s were certainly known for Northern California’s most famous intersection - Haight/Ashbury, the carotid artery of San Francisco’s happening. A once common corner bloomed into the eye of the hippie hurricane. Hundreds of thousands of necklace-wearing, sandled, long-haired young people from sea to shining sea flocked to the neighborhood that would then and always define the 60s.

From City Lights Book Store on Columbus, just a few miles east of Haight/Ashbury, and to Harrison and streets below Market, the entire nervous system of San Francisco is illustrated by Jack Kerouac in his 80-chorus, "San Francisco Blues." From the 27th Chorus: "San Francisco/San Francisco/You're a muttering bum/in a brown beat suit/can't make a woman/on a rainy corner." (Kerouac, 28). Through various other songs and poetry, students will be introduced to the spirit and the personality of San Francisco.

KEROUAC: Not really a hippie, but a grand daddy of the Beat movement (hence hippie), just Kerouac's aura became an illuminating path for those heading west - those wishing to walk and ride his same "road" In Campbell McGrath's, "Blue Tulips and Night Train for Jack Kerouac's Grave," the pilgrimage to Kerouac's grave is tantamount to the road to Canterbury. "Better to reach the transient, the golden, the furiously burning spirits of the living." (McGrath, 33). Although he is gone, and even though Kerouac's existence is personified, as he would have wanted it - go on with life...LIVE!

LET THERE BE CITY LIGHTS: The most famous bookstore in all of America sits on a corner in San Francisco's North Beach - the Little Italy of the Emerald City. The 1960's without Lawrence Ferlinghetti would have been like Atlantic City without the Boardwalk. Synonymous with the voice of a generation, Ferlinghetti defines the San Francisco that was, that is and will be. In his prose poem, "A Report on a Happening in Washington Square San Francisco," Ferlinghetti uses a bride and groom as vehicle and tenor for fate. "...disappearing into their destinies in which even the two roped together would in the normal course of life lose their breath and shrivel away and fall to earth out of air." (Ferlinghetti, 29). Equal doses of reality and prognostication, the poet of Columbus Street foretells that everything that rises must eventually fall.

METAMORPHOSIS: Once called LeRoi Jones, as if a butterfly emerged, Amiri Baraka became a voice of the decade. In his small, but poignant epistle, Baraka defines poetry and the craft of writing.

"The only time I am conscious of my limitations is when I am writing. The rest of the time, there is no standard, at all reasonable, for judging, in fact, what limitations are." (Baraka, 133). To understand the voices, the student will read and hear from the wordsmiths themselves. Baraka's essay speaks for the writer, as well as for the black American who was on the verge of true freedom, liberated by the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

HOWLING, HURLING, SCREAMING: Allen Ginsberg. One name. One man. One generation. Allen Ginsberg. Irreverent with the affliction of reality, Ginsberg evoked a variety of emotions from the public. Whether obscene, confusing or menacing, Ginsberg wrote and spoke from his heart. Whether it was "Howl," the classic epic poem which decried the abuses of government, or "Kaddish," the loving and sacrilegious tribute to his mother, Ginsberg, more than any other poet of this century could literally elicit blood,

sweat and tears from his audience. Igniting literary pyrotechnics, Ginsberg lambastes the government, politics and even the president in, "Television Was a Baby Crawling Toward That Death chamber." "whenever and whoever is plugged in by real filaments or wireless or/whatever magic-wordy synapse to the money-center of the mind/whose Eye is hidden somewhere behind ALL mass media - what makes/reporters fear their secret dreamy news - behind the Presidential mike and all its starry bunting, front for some mad BILLIONAIRES/who own United Fruits & Standard Oil and Hearst The Press and Texas NBC and someone owns the Radios owns vast Spheres of Air..." (Ginsberg, 121).

DEAD ON ARRIVAL: Even though she died in 1963, Sylvia Plath's darkly-laced words were in many ways a collective premonition of the decade that would lose its innocence. In her lugubrious, "Stillborn," the poet laments, "...and still the lungs won't fill and the heart won't start." (Plath, 142). What insight to a decade that would see many dreams perish. Evidence of life being too much of a burden, the poet, in a Dickinsonian voice, sees herself at final rest in "I am Vertical" "...And I shall be useful when I lie down finally/Then the trees may touch me for once, and the flowers have time for me."(Plath, 162). Although the 60's is remembered for LSD and pot, it was also known for Agent Orange and the most destructive drug of the decade - Thalidomide. In her poem of the same name Plath, simply, but emotionally describes the disastrous effects of the drug..."The glass cracks across/The image/Flees and aborts like dropped mercury. There is no better poet to voice the loss of innocence in the tempestuous decade than Sylvia Plath, who exited, dead on arrival.

THE MILITARIZED ZONE: Bill Knott's "Two Vietnam Poems: 1966" finally attend to the actual war...the war that would cut the majority of Americans' umbilical cord from hope and victory. The loss of innocence began with JFK's death, and from then on, it was a force that could never be stopped - even to this day. "I'm tired of murdering children/Once, long ago, they wanted to live/now I feel Vietnam is the place/where rigor mortis is beginning to set-in upon me. (Knott, 5). "I blink away the stinging gleam as my country sows desert upon Vietnam." (Knott, 6)

What was there left to hope? How could the young believe in America, in themselves any longer? How about another dead American soldier or Viet Cong with your meatloaf and potatoes? How about another suicidal Buddhist monk, aflame in gasoline, with your sirloin and corn on the cob? Indeed, America was at the fork in the road Robert Frost had never envisioned. Both paths were suspect. Both paths lead to questionable destinations. One was the path of free love: Drugs, sex and rock and roll. The sexual revolution would lead to the era of permissiveness and AIDS. The other road was a leafy path through the jungles of Vietnam...a road that would be paved with the souls of 58,000 American men and women. Both roads were hardly diverged, for they would come together to lead us further into the dark and further into destruction, bedlam and confusion.

OBJECTIVES OF THE CURRICULUM UNIT

The main objective of the curriculum unit is to dispel the myth of the 60s as being a free-for-all. Even though the decade is ancient history to our students, most perceive it as a framework for hippies and drugs. There was a plethora of voices of conscience in the 60s. The students must see that the war in Vietnam was destructive, and that like a house of cards, it destroyed more than one little country in Southeast Asia, and 58,000 lives. It also divided the nation, and people were disconsolate about the consequences of the assassinations, the riots and the upheavals in society. The paramount objective is to place the 60s in perspective, dispel the myths of the decade and to celebrate the angst in poetry and music.

Another objective of the unit is to teach students that their voice is essential in bringing about change, celebrating the conscience and analyzing and creating poetry that deals with deeper issues other than love, a theme that not only frightens most teenage boys, but is a gross generalization of teens. By reading the poets in this unit, students will begin to see poetry in a completely different light. The psychological benefits are as important as the literary ones.

In a constant state of angst, many teenagers have trouble accepting that anyone believes in them. Through poetry, they will begin to see that they are not alone at all, but more in the mainstream than they had realized.

A third objective of the unit is to introduce AP terminology into the study of poetry. Although students might look at poetry as amorphous, structure is deceiving. In understanding the technical side of the form, and the literary value of the form, it's that much more fulfilling to copycat the masters, then break the mold and create!

The fourth objective is to utilize technology. The technology component is multi-faceted. The students will employ the Internet in doing research on the period and on a particular poet or songwriter. Not only is technology mandated by the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), it is simply necessary for students to learn how to navigate through this medium at its infancy stage. Students will also use video and recording devices to produce group presentations.

A fifth objective is "viewing." Several benchmark films of the 60's are necessary to share with the students. "The Graduate," moved the young Benjamin Braddock from "plastics" to forbidding carnal knowledge. It was the quintessential coming of age/rite of passage film of the decade. "To Sir With Love," makes the important connection of teacher and student, as well as highlighting the theme of the unit, "Crayons to Perfume." "Midnight Cowboy," a landmark film for 1969 seems tame today, yet there is no greater example of the failure of the American Dream. Even though the film was from a different decade, and it was much weaker than the stage production, "Hair," is a favorite among teenagers. They envision their parents, and they are moved by the story. The visuals are authentic, and "flower power" is personified. Through original reviews of the films, and class writings, the students will fine-tune their analytical skills.

The last objective is to give birth to the creative soul which lies within every individual. Through poetry, often times, even the most reluctant learner often comes alive. Poetry does not seem as structured to the teenager, and therefore, the form is quite malleable in tender and tentative hands, hearts and minds. Having absorbed the soul of the 60's, it is hoped that the teenager of the 90's will have the impetus to search for the poets and songwriters of today that illustrate a conscience - to find that message in rock, rap, heavy metal, folk and various forms of poetry and prose.

STRATEGIES

How does a teacher introduce poetry to a class of high school juniors without intimidating his class? It is imperative that the teenager sense all he is going to learn, and to connect with prior affiliation with the subject. I ask my students to take a colored marker and come to a six foot piece of colored bulletin board paper and write one singular word that comes to mind when hearing the word "poetry." Invariably, kids will write, "love," "feeling," and other touchy-feely words, but to my surprise, students show great insight into the genre by writing such words as "war," "death," "hate," "England." The teacher doesn't have to be afraid of the kids writing off topic, because the kids will take this seriously. I ask them to do something with their word...frame it, write it in a unique design, etc. When the bulletin board paper is completely decorated with words, by all classes, I laminate it and put it up.

Without the students realizing it, the "wading pool effect" quickly turns into total immersion, and the kids are on their way to beginning to understand the genre which faces them.

The students will discuss and analyze the previously mentioned poems, as well as others. The study of poetry, in the context of a time period, or in general, must be approached seriously, but with many audio, visual and tactile activities. I ask the kids to take ten words from the banner we have made, and to place them in some order. Some will choose to place them in alphabetical order, some in order of size, some in no particular order known to us, but it is to them! I ask them to match the word with some kind of reference/meaning/synonym/antonym. I ask that they place these words in some kind of order to create a collective meaning, hence they write their first poem. The poem, which seemed to be about poetry, turns out much more vast and erudite than one could imagine.

The teenager of today must make visual and audio connections. Through the art of Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein and Peter Max, the kids will write short pieces of what a particular work of art "says." First thoughts are necessary, as the kids write what they are seeing in the picture...the piece can be a narrative, but it will eventually become a piece of rhymes, or free verse poetry.

Another strategy is “found” poetry. Using newspaper articles from the 60s, whether it is about Alan Shepherd’s first trip into space, or the election of JFK, the assassination of JFK, the LBJ years, Vietnam, the Beatles, Supremes, film reviews, etc., students will read an article chosen from random and create two different poems from the article. One will be rhymed with a particular beat and meter, and one will be free verse. This skill teaches many skills, the most important being summarization, comparison/contrast and main idea. If strategies reflect TAAS and TEKS, the powers that be will be thrilled that unique and outlandish methods are being employed to make certain that the students are learning and enjoying the process at the same time!

During the course of study of the loss of innocence in poetry and song, students will research and produce a substantial Junior Thesis, as well as a group presentation and an original video. The Junior Thesis will be a paper of five to seven pages, structured in MLA-style, and focus on the work of a particular poet or songwriter of the 60’s. Students will have three weeks in which to produce the paper. In groups, students will create a musical video on a fictitious poet or songwriter of the 60’s. Video will be three-five minutes in length and will either document the figure’s life or a particular aspect of his/her life. The framework will focus on the 60s.

THE FILM COMPONENT

How does one teach about the 60’s only through words and music? The students must visualize the decade as it was visualized through filmmakers of the time.

“To Sir with Love,” is the preeminent connection between student and teacher in the 60s. From the deeply touching lyrics to the painful relationship between student and teacher, the kids will see that there has always been a strong bond between teacher and student, but eventually it is time to grow up and cut the umbilical cord. “How do you thank someone who has taken you from crayons to perfume?” What great lyrics. Hopefully, the kids will see that a caring teacher actually sees the kid grow, crawl, walk, stumble and eventually run...it is an emotional journey that is necessary for both teacher and student to take.

Ask any baby boomer, or film buff, who was the most important character of the entire decade, and one might answer, “Benjamin Braddock.” The full illustration of the loss of innocence, as defined by Mike Nichols in “The Graduate,” is a hallmark of film history that has no peer. From Benjamin’s unsure arrival at LAX to the melodic threshold of Simon and Garfunkle’s “The Sounds of Silence,” to the his and Elaine’s triumphant bus ride into eternity, this film epitomized the decade and foretold what was to come. “Plastics” became as famous as “Tomorrow is another day” in film semantics.

Part Moses, part Jesus and all pathos, John Schlesinger’s 1969 masterpiece showcased the art of Dustin Hoffman and the emergence of John Voight. The American Dream gone bad, to the second power summed up the decade. Ratso’s hopes and dreams, a metaphor for the destruction of the 60’s, were never realized, as he symbolized the dreams and

promises that were unfulfilled. Voight's sexually raw and vapid cowboy hustler symbolized the brash, bombastic, brusque and ugly American. Planning to take New York by story, Joe Buck was totally outsmarted by real hustlers - New Yorkers! All brain and no brawn, Hoffman's Rizzo died before entering the promised land of Miami Beach, and all brawn and no brain, Voight's Joe Buck returned to his giant Texas with his tail between his legs. A bombastic and brusque decade - yes. Hopes and dreams smashed against the windshield like a moth at midnight, but it was a great decade because it had guts.

The theme of the curriculum unit might seem totally morose, so we will end the film component with "Hair." The film never captured the intensity of the stage show, but the costumes and the music are important for the kids to see. If we began the decade with Schmidt and Jones' "The Fantastics," and "Try to remember that time in September when days were sweet and oh, so mellow," reminiscing about the past, we end the decade ultimately with hope, "Let the sun shine in."

Through the film and music of the 60's the students will further understand the intensity that thrived in the century's most tempestuous decade.

WEEK ONE: Physical, Lyrical and Emotional Geography

At the dawn of the 60's, America, even though powered by the Sputnik technology, was still relatively sleepy. Ike was still president and Mamie's bangs still sent waves of gleeful roars through the hair industry. On a little street in a little village in a very large city a phenomenon was about to take place. May 3, 1960. Sullivan Street Playhouse. Greenwich Village. Manhattan. A small show opened on May 3rd to nice reviews, and instantly a song became a new American standard. "Try to remember," was the ballad sung by Jerry Orbach at the show's exposition when he recalls a halcyon time in life. "Try to remember the kind of September when life was slow and oh, so mellow." (Innocence). "Try to remember the kind of September when you were a tender and callow fellow." (Youth). "No one wept except the willow." (Internal rhyme).

Students will respond to the following thoughts:

1. What is innocence? 2. When does a person lose his/her innocence? 3. What is one aspect of your early youth you wish could have lasted forever? 4. Which movie, television show or novel illustrates an innocent time?

"Try to Remember" is the epitome of innocence, and after class discussion of innocence and the loss thereof, the song will be played, all students will have the lyrics. Students will underline favorite words, phrases and we will do a jump-in reading. The students will discuss the innocence in the poem. Can this exist today? We will also read Kerouac's "Macdougall Street Blues," because it will give students a sense of place. Macdougall Street is parallel to Sullivan Street and is only a few steps away.

Along with the Statue of Liberty, the United Nations and Central Park, "The Fantastics," is a New York sightseeing staple. About to celebrate its 40th anniversary, its

unapologetic mawkishness still draws full houses every night. Students will also read original reviews, and updated reviews of the Schmidt/Jones classic.

Students are given a list of AP literary terms. The major terms we will define, illustrate, analyze and bring to life are: abstract; allegory; catharsis; conflict; controlling image; epiphany; ethos; imagery; invective; metonymy; repetition; rhetoric; sarcasm; tenor & vehicle; utopia; dystopia.

Each student will have a map of San Francisco, and one will be blown up and laminated in the room. The students are asked: 1. Are there any sections of Houston that are really funky, alternative, cool, diverse? We will identify City Lights Bookstore on Columbus Ave. in SF and read the "27th Chorus" from Kerouac's "San Francisco Blues." 1. Why is the name of the city, San Francisco repeated twice? What is the effect on the reader? The poem? 2. How is San Francisco analogous to a "muttering bum?" 3. What is the image the speaker is creating with the particular words/lines, "brown beat suit," "rainy corner," "lost in vapors," and "cold and bleak?" 4. San Francisco is known as the most romantic city in America - is that the speaker's point of view?

Students are given a copy of "Blue Tulips and Night Train for Jack Kerouac's Grave." Several readings will ensue. One silent reading. Two teacher readings. Jump-in readings. Students will highlight, underline words, names, images that are familiar. Upon second reading, unfamiliar words, names, phrases will be underlined. Students are given 3 x 5 note cards, and on the unlined side, using colored markers, they will write five cards with one word, one name or one phrase on each.

Cards will be taped on the board. It is probable that some cards will repeat - that's ok. 1. What do we see here? We read all of the cards, and students respond to the "essence" of "Blue Tulips." We discuss the order of things...how can we put these words together to create a new poem? Let's do it a few different ways. First, students will place the words in alphabetical order. Repeats are ok! We read again. Next, words are placed in reverse alphabetical order. Repeats are ok. Finally we place the words in chronological order. We discuss the function of syntax. 1. Does this poem now relay the same message as the original? How does the meaning change in the four different incarnations? (Random, alpha, reverse alpha, chronological). Students are given Kerouac's obituary and photos, and each group creates a new "Blue Tulips" poem based on the new order. Each group titles the poem, and produces a poster celebrating the daddy of the beat generation.

WEEK TWO: Finite to Infinite

No other poet of her generation saw life from such a despondent, miserable perspective. Shrouded with misery every day of her life, Sylvia Plath personified death and the depths of depression.

Students are asked to write five depressing words on cards - which will be taped to the board. Students are asked to write five depressing situations - cards are taped to the

board. Discussion focuses on all the terms brought up by the students. The AP term “dystopia” comes to mind - a perfect place gone bad. In Plath’s case, life in general.

Class reads poem, “Stillborn.” Has anyone had a stillborn baby in their family? Lose a very young infant? “Still the lungs won’t fill and the heart won’t start.” Concretely (vehicle) this is a stillborn baby, but abstractly (tenor) what is dead? Students make an entry in their dialectical journals. The poet’s outlook has no hope whatsoever - what is the purpose of her tone? How does it effect the reader’s emotional level?

Students will continue to work on Plath poems, “I am vertical” and “Thalidomide.” Students will create dialectical journals on bulletin board paper and present them to the class. They will choose up to three AP literary terms from their list.

A true metamorphosis, LeRoi Jones emerged in the 1960s as Amiri Baraka. Students enter the room to a quote on the overhead - “The only time I am conscious of my limitations is when I am writing.” Students are asked to respond to the quote in the context of writing and thinking, then they respond to quote in general.

Class reads Baraka’s essay and discussion focuses on the emergence of black power in the 60s. Who is fighting for acceptance and understanding today?

Students read Baraka’s essay in prose form, and break off into groups of three to rewrite essay in poetic form. We must go through several stages. Students isolate all nouns-adjectives-verbs. They discuss in groups how to increase the effect of the work by putting it in poetry form. One entire class is devoted to the restructuring of the poem. The group will also write a copycat poem based on a struggle for acceptance and understanding today.

PLASTICS: *The Graduate*

As the American government’s credibility was lost for the last time - it would be difficult to ever trust the government again - director Mike Nichols and writer Buck Henry coalesced their fertile and sardonic minds to create *The Graduate*. Just returning home to California (the American Dream) from a four-year Ivy League education in the East (the American Dream) Benjamin Braddock begins a journey of self-discovery which is met with many curves in the road. A handsome, bright, albeit nebbish man of 22, Ben, with all of his education, does not know what to do with himself. The typical course would for him to work a few years, accrue a certain bank balance, meet the girl next door, propose to her with the proper engagement ring, marry and live happily-ever-after. Some of the elements are there - others are not.

In what is probably the most quoted line of any movie of the decade, a line of only one word - “Plastics,” is the one word of advice Ben receives from friends of the family. What rich symbolism. While predicting a booming business for the plastic industry, just the word summoned characteristics of friends of the family, his parents’ forced joviality, and

of course targeted Mrs. Robinson, the vehicle through whom Ben would lose his innocence.

Students will view film with character webs in hand. At the center of each web is the character's name - Ben, Mrs. Robinson, Elaine. The students will web characteristics of each, while jotting down salient quotes from the film. After the film, students will write five questions each on 3x5 index cards. Questions will concern journey, destination, loss of innocence, motivation and symbolism. Each student, in a circle, will pick a question from a small box, and respond to the class as a whole. Ideally, class discussions will be generated from the class-produced questions.

"In restless dreams I walked alone..." Students receive a copy of "The Sounds of Silence," Simon and Garfunkle's theme song from the film. Song will be read as a poem, then played, then sung along with the music one more time. Students are asked to parallel the song with the actions of the film, in dialectical journal style. On one side of the page a certain line is written, on the opposite side of the t-chart, student analyzes line in the context of the film.

Finally, with movie reviews in hand from the NY Times, and from Pauline Kale, students react to the critical analysis. Do you agree with the critic? Disagree? What valid points do the critics make? Identify several sentences or critical words that make the review credible. How do you think the movie is viewed today?

HOWLING: Allen Ginsberg

The master of the poetic form for a generation - the master dissident and sounding board for the ills of American society, Allen Ginsberg speaks his mind like no other poet of the century. In "Television Was a Baby Crawling Toward the Death chamber," Ginsberg's vitriolic stream of consciousness literally unloads clip after clip of machine gun invective onto the boob tube.

Students will highlight all lines dealing with television, elitism and the powers who seemingly control the media. Students will respond, favorably or unfavorably, but in an intelligent and analytical manner to Ginsberg's odium for the establishment. Students are asked what in society today angers them, and what about government or big business today is controlling the American people.

Students are asked to identify an ill of government/society/media today and write a stream of consciousness poem, in the form of "Television." It may be a parody of Ginsberg, or unrelated to him, but staying on the issue of brainwashing and control.

In an expurgated and abridged version of "Howl," the students will further be exposed to Ginsberg's howling and hurling criticism and malevolence about his generation that was seemingly singled out and shafted for being iconoclasts.

THE LAST STRAW: Vietnam

In the final blow to innocence and the last straw for a generation, Vietnam was the defining moment of embarrassment for the United States. Near the end of the decade, all energy focused on Vietnam, whether in protest or support, America was polarized and our collective “Yankee-ness” was unzipped.

Students will enter the room to find an enlarged photograph of the Vietnam Memorial (the Wall) in Washington, DC. Taps is playing softly on the boom box, and the room is darkened. With a colored Vis-a-vis pen, the teacher writes a name on the Wall. Students are asked to line up, in a solemn manner, and take a marker and write a beloved’s name on the Wall who has passed from this life.

After 30 names are written on the Wall, students are asked how many names are actually on the Wall in DC. 58,000. Can you imagine that many names on a stark black wall? Does anyone know anyone who died in Vietnam?

Students receive Bill Knott’s poems, “Two Vietnam Poems: 1966.” Students are asked to journal the following topic - “Could you kill a child or a woman, or any human being in war?” Class discussion will be lively and differing points of view will be accepted. We then go into Knott’s poem.

“I’m tired of murdering children/Once, long ago, they wanted to live/now I feel Vietnam is the place where rigor mortis beginning to set-in upon me.” The soldier is alive, why is rigor mortis setting in on him? Who and why is he killing? Discuss the effects it is having on him, as a symbol of America, and the helpless Vietnamese. Will he have this on his conscience forever, or was he being the perfect American combat soldier and following orders? How do you think the soldier felt differently from when he began his tour of duty and after several months “in country,” (in Vietnam)?

Students will complete a diary of an American soldier in Vietnam from his days preceding his leave until his return to the USA after two years. How did the soldier change? Do you imagine he would encourage his son one day to become a soldier? How did he feel about his buddies whose brains slipped through his hands? How did he feel about returning to America and to a society who didn’t revere him as they had other veterans of war?

FROM CRAYONS TO PERFUME: “To Sir With Love”

Students will enter the classroom to find a variety of yearbooks from the late 60s, and to the Lulu theme song from the film. Of course, much laughing and bedlam will ensue as the students peruse the yearbooks from the end of the decade. It is not inconceivable for a student to find his or her own mother, father, aunt or uncle!

Students are asked to find one teacher, one student and one activity in the yearbook and to write short descriptions of each. One will find a boy with long, curly hair and they will describe him - as well as predict what he is doing today! They will do the same with

the activity...did one of those guys become an Astro? Cowboy? A drug dealer? An attorney? And one teacher - look at the faces closely. Which teacher do you feel would have been your favorite? Why?

As a 48-year-old man or woman, write that teacher a letter describing how your life progressed in 30-years, and explain why this teacher was influential in your life.

Students will view film, "To Sir With Love," and will keep a diary of the characters. Which one is you? Which one is your best friend? What kind, if any, connection do you feel with the teacher? Which teacher in school today is your mentor, your guide, the one who has taken you from crayons to perfume? Before you graduate, write him/her a letter of appreciation.

WEEK THREE THE MUSIC: Are the answers still blowin' in the wind?

Although the class has already learned and analyzed "The Sounds of Silence," there are five other songs that define the emotional angst of the decade. Class is divided into five groups for the project. The following songs will be carefully scrutinized for loss of innocence, confusion and for questions about the soul. "Blowin' in the Wind," Bob Dylan's masterful theme - a classic today; "White Rabbit," Jefferson Airplane's (Grace Slick) homage to drug abuse; "Dory and Andre's morose, simplistic and utterly jejune theme from the greatest B movie of the decade, "Valley of the Dolls"; and finally, Lulu's rite of passage theme, "To Sir, With Love."

The task for each group is to read the song, then listen to the song - each group will have portable cd players. For the song, two different AP literary terms will be applied and mapped out in a dialectical journal. The group comes up with a message. Identify the loss of innocence in each song. What is the speaker's point of view/attitude? Why do you think the song has endured for thirty years or more? In the song, identify metaphors and symbols. What is the controlling image in the song? Create a visual interpretation of the song. Finally, interview someone who went to high school in the 60s. Teachers may be interviewed, family members, complete strangers.

Give them a copy of the song and ask the interviewee if the song is remembered, and what it meant then, and what it means now. Group will organize and place all materials in a colored brad folder and submit it for partial credit on unit.

For the final and most complex project, groups of three will research one of the following poets or songwriters from the 60s. Bob Dylan, Grace Slick, Rod McKuen, Gwendolyn Brooks, Sylvia Plath, Allen Ginsberg, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Amiri Baraka, Ann Sexton, Maya Angelou, Joan Baez, Simon & Garfunkle, The Beach Boys, The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, and other poets and songwriters of the decade.

Group will research four poems/song of their subject that fit a particular theme - it need not be loss of innocence. Group will also create new poem/song in the style of the writer. On a tri-fold exhibit, in the center will be a picture of the poet/songwriter, a short

biographical profile of the subject and the theme. WAR, COMING OF AGE, PROTEST, FREE LOVE, etc. On the two sides of the tri-fold will be the four poems/songs, one in complete explication. The other three will be highlighted in appropriate places pointing out the theme. Exhibit will also have photographs of the 60s. At the bottom of the picture of the writer will be the original poet/song written by the group. For the presentation, the group will perform the poem or song, and briefly describe the manifestation of the theme in the poetry/music of the subject.

During the presentations, which will be given in a *happening*-style venue, the film, "Hair" will be on in the background, and all of the students and the teacher will be dressed in hippie-esque clothing. Students will mill about the room going to different presentations asking questions about the subject and his/her music.

The decade, which had only been known through some movies and hearsay came alive for the kids. The intricate study of the poets and the music of the decade solidified the theme of "loss of innocence." Students not only studied the words of the era, but lived it through interviewing, the application of literary terms, the genre of poetry and by creating an exhibit of a salient voice of the decade.

WORKS CITED

Ferlinghetti, Lawrence. These Are My Rivers: New and Selected Poems 1955-1993. New directions. New York: 1993.

(Comprehensive collection of the Beat master)

Ginsberg, Allen. Selected Poems 1947-1995.

HarperCollins. New York: 1994

(Comprehensive collection of angry and rude, but remarkably hip social commentary)

Kerouac, Jack. Book of Blues. Penguin Poets.

New York: 1995.

(The hippest of all Daddies, Kerouac's tomes on the direction of his generation)

McGrath, Campbell. American Noise.

The Ecco Press. Hopewell, New Jersey: 1993.

(Angst and local color of the decade)

Vangelisti, Paul, ed. Transbluency: The Selected Poems of Amiri Baraka/LeRoi Jones 1961-1995.

Marsilio Publishers. New York: 1995.

(Collection of male, generational black-themed poetry of Baraka)

Blowin' In The Wind

www.orad.dent.kyushu-u.ac.jp/dylan/Blowind.html

The Sound of Silence

www.digitaltimes.com/lyrics/soundofsilence

To Sir with Love

www.Lululyrics.com

Try to Remember

Original New York Cast album, "The Fantastics"

Valley of the Dolls

www.superior.net/~jimligon/lyrics/music-pop/Dionne

White Rabbit

www.home.getaway.net/bretts/rabbit.html