2020

Spontaneous Minds and Electric Romanticism: Kerouac, Ginsberg, Dylan, Joplin

Sasha Tamar Strelitz
University of Denver

Spontaneous Minds and Electric Romanticism: Kerouac, Ginsberg, Dylan, Joplin

Abstract

This dissertation postulates a sub-category of Romanticism: electric Romanticism. As opposed to its "acoustic" forebear, electric Romanticism exists in an electric age, beginning after Henry David Thoreau's rumination on the telegraph wire as an electric rendering of the æolian harp image. Romantic poets used the æolian harp to analogize the act of writing activities set into motion by spontaneous thoughts, a central attribute of the Romantic literary movement. The modernized electric version of the æolian harp—the telegraph wire—signals that electric Romanticism branches off from its source and evolves along with technology to engage more synchronously with the spontaneous.

Electric Romantics either utilize technology as catalysts for their art or they themselves mimic electricity as they create. This dissertation focuses on four mid-twentieth-century artists who are central to electric Romanticism: Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, Bob Dylan, and Janis Joplin. Kerouac's and Ginsberg's electric Romanticism resembles the acoustic, but the Beats' cultural landscape contained technological advancements they used to achieve spontaneous writing—such as typewriters, automobiles, and tape recorders—as well as other more nefarious products of the electric age in wartime that they protested (e.g. nuclear warfare). Dylan's electric gesture of protest not only achieved the spontaneous, but also redefined what spontaneity in terms of Romanticism looked like in twentieth-century America: the visionary poetic mode modernized for an electric, psychedelic age. The more material versions of electric Romanticism represented by Kerouac, Ginsberg, and Dylan all lead up to Joplin's rendering, which is more abstract, as she embodied electricity in her performances. Central to her performances was the feedback loop between her and her audience, which hinged on spontaneity; she tapped into that "music in the air" Thoreau wrote about in 1851.

In conclusion, where traditional, "acoustic" Romanticism attempts to achieve spontaneity, electric Romanticism—as represented by Kerouac, Ginsberg, Dylan, and Joplin—is better equipped to attain it. Similar to the telegraph's power of quickly delivering messages from disparate places, by capturing immediacy in their art, these midcentury poets and musicians fully represent the spontaneous.

Document Type

Dissertation

Degree Name

Ph.D.

Department

English

First Advisor

Clark Davis

Second Advisor

Rachel Feder

Third Advisor

Adam Rovner

Spontaneous Minds and Electric Romanticism:

Kerouac, Ginsberg, Dylan, Joplin

A Dissertation

Presented to

the Faculty of the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences

University of Denver

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

---

by

Sasha Tamar Strelitz

June 2020

Advisor: Dr. Clark Davis

Author: Sasha Tamar Strelitz
Title: Spontaneous Minds and Electric Romanticism:
Kerouac, Ginsberg, Dylan, Joplin
Advisor: Dr. Clark Davis
Degree Date: June 2020

Abstract

This dissertation postulates a sub-category of Romanticism: electric Romanticism. As opposed to its "acoustic" forebear, electric Romanticism exists in an electric age, beginning after Henry David Thoreau's rumination on the telegraph wire as an electric rendering of the æolian harp image. Romantic poets used the æolian harp to analogize the act of writing activities set into motion by spontaneous thoughts, a central attribute of the Romantic literary movement. The modernized electric version of the æolian harp—the telegraph wire—signals that electric Romanticism branches off from its source and evolves along with technology to engage more synchronously with the spontaneous.

Electric Romantics either utilize technology as catalysts for their art or they themselves mimic electricity as they create. This dissertation focuses on four mid-twentieth-century artists who are central to electric Romanticism: Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, Bob Dylan, and Janis Joplin. Kerouac's and Ginsberg's electric Romanticism resembles the acoustic, but the Beats' cultural landscape contained technological advancements they used to achieve spontaneous writing—such as typewriters, automobiles, and tape recorders—as well as other more nefarious products of the electric age in wartime that they protested (e.g. nuclear warfare). Dylan's electric gesture of protest not only achieved the spontaneous, but also redefined what spontaneity in terms of Romanticism looked like in twentieth-century America: the visionary poetic mode modernized for an electric, psychedelic age. The more material versions of electric Romanticism represented by Kerouac, Ginsberg, and Dylan all

lead up to Joplin's rendering, which is more abstract, as she embodied electricity in her performances. Central to her performances was the feedback loop between her and her audience, which hinged on spontaneity; she tapped into that "music in the air" Thoreau wrote about in 1851.

In conclusion, where traditional, "acoustic" Romanticism attempts to achieve spontaneity, electric Romanticism—as represented by Kerouac, Ginsberg, Dylan, and Joplin—is better equipped to attain it. Similar to the telegraph's power of quickly delivering messages from disparate places, by capturing immediacy in their art, these midcentury poets and musicians fully represent the spontaneous.

Acknowledgements

To Dr. Clark Davis, Dr. Rachel Feder, Dr. Graham Foust, and Dr. Adam Rovner, thank you each for your contributions to this dissertation. Your guidance during coursework, comprehensive exams, and through the dissertation process was essential not only to the outcome, but also to the evolution of my thinking on the spiderweb of topics covered.

I have so much gratitude for Dr. Jessica Comola, Dr. Elisabeth Kinsey, Dr. Julia Madsen, Dr. Juli Parrish, Olivia Tracy, and Alison Turner, all of whom provided support in various ways during my tenure in the program. I am grateful for your friendship.

To those who call me Sash and Sashita: your support—from Ariel days to Sister Morphine days to the here and now in the Rocky Mountain High, and all the in-between—is invaluable. Whether we share DNA or whether you electively jumped on the crazy train, you are each essential components to the fiber of my being. I love each and every one of you tremendously. A special shout out to the OGs at 34th Street: thank you for indoctrinating me in the cult of Rock. I've never looked back since the Young Rascals!

To Stevie Nicks, my furry little babe, thank you for being the best compañerita, for snuggling with me when I needed it and checking me when I deserved it.

To the rider by my side, thank you endlessly for…everything. Thank you for seeing beyond my stress and committing to a life with me, even though you have never known me outside of graduate school. Thank you for entertaining my yammering on about Emerson and co. on hikes, for making sure I get enough movement and vitamin D, for listening to my irrationalities, for providing much-needed distraction, for proofreading, for helping to quiet my bitchy mental roommate, for insisting on my taking breaks, and generally, for being my best friend—"I love you so well."

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....iv

Overture.....1

"Through the Keyhole of His Eye": I Think of Jack Kerouac, I Even Think of Jack Kerouac's Spontaneous Bop Prosody.....26

Where Are We Going, Allen Ginsberg? Which Way Does Your Beard Point Tonight?.....71

"Strike Another Match, Go Start Anew": Bob Dylan's Visionary Period, Side One.....116

"Strike Another Match, Go Start Anew": Bob Dylan's Visionary Period, Side Two.....156

"Work Me, Lord": Janis Joplin's Kozmic Blues.....192

Coda.....215

Works Cited.....221

Overture

"When the zephyr, or west wind, sweeps this wire,

I rise to the height of my being."

~Henry David Thoreau, 1851

"The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind

The answer is blowin' in the wind."

~Bob Dylan, 1963

I.

In September 1851, Henry David Thoreau was captivated by the new telegraph wire installed near his cabin. On September 3rd, he wrote in his journal that he revered the wire for its transcendental properties: "As I went under the new telegraph wire, I heard it vibrating like a harp high overhead. It was as the sound of a far-off glorious life, a supernal life, which came down to us, and vibrated the lattice-work of this life of ours" (Thoreau 57). While Thoreau was not interested in mesmeric revelations like some of his Concord peers such as Margaret Fuller and Orestes Brownson, he uses language in his journal that is reminiscent of a believer in animal magnetism; the "lattice-work" symbolizes the invisible force common to all living beings that underlay Mesmerism (Dann 126).[1] Several days later,

[1] Mesmerism is a therapeutic doctrine established by German doctor Franz Mesmer in the eighteenth century, which was founded on the principle of *Lebensmagnetismus* or animal magnetism ("Mesmerism"). Mesmerists were trained to "induce a hypnotic state in a patient by the exercise of a force," which they referred to as animal magnetism, the natural force all living beings (including vegetables) possess ("Mesmerism").

he surmised that the wire's vibrations transmitted "a triumphant though transient exhibition of the truth" from "higher, infinitely higher, planes of life" that human senses are not naturally attuned to (Thoreau 59). The wind vibrated the telegraph wire and directly communicated "a message to [him] from heaven," a transcendental message about how his life's goal is "distant, and is upward, and is worthy of all your life's effort to attain to" (59).

The contemporarily familiar buzz of a wire or hum of an appliance were alien to Thoreau, because electromagnetic telegraphy was the first widespread exposure Americans had to the phenomenon of electricity (McCormack 570). The "sound of a far-off glorious life" which "vibrated the lattice-work of this life of ours" is the audible resonance of an electric current streaming through the wire's electromagnetic winding, which generates a magnetic field that powers the telegraph (Menon 76). While it is likely that Thoreau understood the science on some level, in his journal, he elevates the practical device to a level that "always brings a special and general message to me from the Highest" (Thoreau 104). Thoreau's gesture is similar to how the Romantic poets imbued higher meaning into the realm of the ordinary, or as William Wordsworth explains in his Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, to "chuse incidents and situations from common life" and "throw over them a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual way." While it is anachronistic to categorize electricity like that surging through the telegraph wire as ordinary in the 1850s—it was in fact a novel and "mysterious life-force"—Thoreau emphasizes that he exalts the wind (McCormack 570). He deems the telegraph wire to apractical, albeit relatively futuristic device that sculpts the sounds from the air, as that which aids in the delivery of the transcendental messages: "When the zephyr, or west wind, sweeps this wire, I rise to the height of my being" (Thoreau 104).

The new technological advancement of the electromagnetic telegraph was socio-culturally understood as a medium for preternatural communication by which one could transcend time and space, and some even speculated that it could allow access beyond this plane of existence to the next (McCormack 571). Access to a new mode of communication revolutionized people's temporal and spatial expectations, as it was now possible to engage in immediate communication across long distances (570). However, Thoreau does not seem to marvel at the telegraph wire for its achievement in human communication. In Jerusha Hull McCormack's essay about Emily Dickinson's "telegraphic" poems, he emphasizes the significance of telegraphy in an expression of religious mania called Spiritualism (570). Spiritualism is a result of people imbuing the phenomena of electricity, specifically the telegraph, with religious meaning. While Thoreau was by no means a Spiritualist, he too recognized the transcendental quality of the practical device, much like a Romantic poet might have done.

Thoreau perceived "supernal life" from the telegraph wire's buzz, which he heard "vibrating like an æolian harp" (Thoreau 59). The æolian harp was an image conjured by Romantic poets such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Percy Bysshe Shelley to denote an intellectual, inspiring breeze that flows through poets when they write. Weeks before the telegraph wire was installed at the entrance to the Deep Cut near his Walden Pond cabin, Thoreau mused on the symbol of the æolian harp:

> There is always a kind of fine æolian harp music to be heard in the air. I hear now, as it were, the mellow sound of distant horns in the hollow mansions of the upper air, a sound to make all men divinely insane that hear it, far away overhead, subsiding into my ear. To ears that are expanded what a harp this world is! (50)

Thoreau regards the Romantic symbol as an intangible device the poet can attune herself to in order to hear music of the exalted wind.[2] An æolian harp is a stringed instrument placed in a window whose sounding board is played by wind gusts that generate harmonic frequencies. Etymologically, "æolian" originates with Aeolus, the Greek wind god, and in 1650, German scholar Athanasius Kircher resuscitated the instrument from Classical antiquity in his book *Musurgia Universalis* ("Aeolian"). Henceforth, it became a popular household instrument between 1750 to 1860, a time frame that corresponds to the Romantic era, during which people were infatuated by Classical ruins and artifacts (Matteson 4).

In terms of the æolian harp as a Romantic trope, Coleridge first used it in his 1795 poem "The Eolian Harp," one of his conversation poems that explores his concept of One Life, or the interconnectedness between humans and Nature, which recalls Thoreau's "lattice-work." The poem's speaker ponders whether "all of animated nature"

> Be but organic harps diversely framed,
> That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweeps
> Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
> At once the Soul of each, and God of All? (Coleridge, "Eolian" 46-49)

If we are all "diversely framed" iterations of One Life, then we are all connected by "one intellectual breeze" that flows "At once [through] the Soul of each." One Life is akin to the concept of universal consciousness, but it is poets who, like æolian harps, are inspired by and channel the "intellectual breeze." Elsewhere in the poem, Coleridge explains that an æolian harp is placed in a window so that the "desultory breeze caresse[s]" it to create "long sequacious notes" that together generate "Such a soft floating witchery of sound" (15, 19,

[2] A few days after this passage, he clarifies that the poet is better adept at hearing the music in the air, because "There is some advantage, intellectually and spiritually, in taking wide views with the bodily eye and not pursuing an occupation which holds the body prone[…]A man may walk abroad and no more see the sky than if he walked under a shed. The poet is more in the air than the naturalist, though they may walk side by side" (54).

21). His application of the trope encapsulates an essential Romantic metaphorical image of the poet creating her poetry. Significantly, Coleridge's poem emerges from the original he simply titled "Effusion xxxv" (Magnuson 4). The fact that the original version of the poem is one of Coleridge's Effusions highlights the fact that, like the music played on the æolian harp, he associates poetry with the outflow of the poet's internal spontaneous thoughts, which are as spontaneous as wind currents. Or, as his friend and co-author of *Lyrical Ballads* Wordsworth famously writes in its Preface, "a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings," which is a concept since abstracted to wholly represent the Romantic manifesto.

Thoreau's telegraph wire emerges as the electric rendering of the acoustic Romantic æolian harp, as he uses it "to hear the music in the air," and with it, he effectively inaugurates an electric Romanticism.[3] Among other aspects of its multi-faceted and sometimes reductive definition,[4] at the crux of Romanticism is the artist's subjectivity—her perceiving consciousness—which spontaneity figures into heavily. Wordsworth's and Coleridge's "acoustic" Romanticism celebrated the spontaneous, as the image of the æolian harp's activation by the wind is analogous to the Romantic poets' writing activities set into motion by their spontaneous thoughts. Like the harp, the poet waits for the spontaneous yet inspiring breeze to stream through her. While both the æolian harp and the telegraph wire's

[3] It is essential to mention that in 1818, Mary Shelley anonymously published *Frankenstein; or The Modern Prometheus*, a famous novel in which Victor Frankenstein animates an inanimate creature henceforth referred to as "wretch" and other demonizing epithets. Frankenstein does so by mysterious scientific means—"the instruments of life"—and only later was the story adapted to include animation by means of electrical bolts, a detail that has stuck in our collective memory of the story (Shelley 83). Therefore, Shelley's novel remains in the pool of Romantic literature that electric Romanticism descends from.

[4] Isaiah Berlin writes that at the heart of Romanticism is creation, but this, like other concise definitions of Romanticism, is nebulous (119). Succinctly, Romanticism as an artistic movement reacted against and therefore staunchly opposed Classicism. Romantic writers shifted from allegory to symbolism and attempted "to reveal through Nature an immediate divine presence" (Chai xi). Aside from an embrace of the spontaneous, other aspects of spontaneity include secularization of religion, the gradual emergency of a historical consciousness and a philosophy of history, pantheism, the theory of subjectivity, and an emphasis upon the role of the creative and perceiving consciousness (xi).

vigils rely on the wind, the telegraph wire functions on an atomic level and more immediately activates with an electric current.[5] Therefore, electric Romanticism branches off from its source and evolves along with technology to engage more synchronously with the spontaneous.

Electric Romanticism is, most straightforwardly, Romanticism in an electric age; however, it is possible that acoustic Romantics continue to create in the electric age. Similar to that of its acoustic forebear, the definition of electric Romanticism is multifaceted and alters slightly from artist to artist. Electric Romantics either utilize technology as catalysts for their art or they themselves mimic electricity as they create. While there are myriad examples of electric Romantics beginning with Thoreau, this dissertation focuses on four of its most essential mid-twentieth-century artists: Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, Bob Dylan, and Janis Joplin. Kerouac's and Ginsberg's electric Romanticism resembles the acoustic, but the Beats' cultural landscape contained technological advancements they used to achieve spontaneous writing—such as typewriters, automobiles, and tape recorders—as well as other more nefarious products of the electric age in wartime that they protested (e.g. nuclear warfare). For Dylan, electric Romanticism continues as that which is defined by the materials utilized to create art that achieved spontaneity, but also takes on new meaning, as Dylan brazenly shifted genres from acoustic folk rock to electric rock, that latter of which he helped establish. His electric gesture of protest not only achieved the spontaneous, but also redefined what spontaneity in terms of Romanticism looked like in twentieth century America: the visionary poetic mode modernized for an electric, psychedelic age. The more

[5] Curiously, in his essay, "The Ørsted-Ritter Partnership and the Birth of Romantic Natural Philosophy, Dan Ch. Christensen Hans discusses the influence that Romanticism had on Hans Christian Ørsted, who discovered electromagnetism in 1820.

material versions of electric Romanticism represented by Kerouac, Ginsberg, and Dylan all lead up to Joplin's rendering, which is more abstract, as she embodied electricity in her performances. While I explicate some of her song lyrics in the final chapter, more emphasis is put on her performances—the feedback loop between her and her audience—which hinged on spontaneity; she tapped into that "music in the air" Thoreau wrote about in 1851. To summarize, where traditional Romanticism attempts to achieve spontaneity, electric Romanticism is better equipped with technologically to attain it. Symbolic of electric Romanticism's ability to capture immediacy and fully represent the spontaneous is the telegraph's power to quickly deliver messages from disparate places.

Accessing and communicating the spontaneous is a form of resistance against the proliferation of Enlightenment ideals, such as a strict adherence to reason. This and the fact that acting spontaneously brings us closer to a state in which we are undifferentiated from Nature—like children—renders spontaneity as one of the central principles of Romanticism. While this may suggest that Romanticism is antirational, I suggest that a thorough understanding of spontaneity will show that *ante*-rational is more appropriate. Before Wordsworth defined poetry as "a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" and before Coleridge concerned himself with the spontaneous music of the æolian harp in one of his Effusion poems, German Idealists preoccupied themselves with the fusion of the mystical and the unconscious with the literary. Their movement grew out of opposition to the Enlightenment's view of religion as rational and progressed along with the *Sturm und Drang* (storm and stress) movement, which produced music and literature that express subjectivity and emotion. One of the movement's most notable artists was Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, whom Friedrich Schiller writes about in terms of spontaneity in his momentous

German Idealist rumination *Naïve and Sentimental Poetry*. Schiller categorizes Goethe and other writers such as Shakespeare as naïve poets, which means that they write spontaneously by embracing immediacy and dismissing self-consciousness, "like a natural object, [which] is simply there without any purpose beyond itself" (Schiller 12). Schiller juxtaposes the naïve poet, who *is* nature, with the sentimental poet, who *seeks* nature (25). He characterizes naïve poets as instruments played upon by the muse, who "record[s] her mysterious and awesome whisperings" that in turn amaze the writer "with no less wonder than any other beholder" (Schiller 12). The product of this process is "an ineffable and transcendent truth[…]brought to utterance" (13).

It is no wonder that Schiller's treatise inspired British Romantics, who linked the concept of the naïve poet with the symbol of the æolian harp, which later figured in Thoreau's illumination of the telegraph wire. Schiller is a luminary who inspired his successors to relinquish reason when creating art, and his philosophy on the spontaneous as "a mere product of nature" evolved into a foundational concept of Romanticism (5). Throughout *Naïve and Sentimental Poetry*, he uses the term *Empfindungsweise* (mode of perception) as a signifier for how the naïve poet perceives the world. *Empfindungsweise* is the natural, unwitting propensity to tune oneself in to the world's frequency, to exist in unity and harmony with the world; so, without using Schiller's term, Thoreau practiced *Empfindungsweise* during his Rousseau-like walks in August of 1851 as he contemplated the æolian harp just before discovering the newly constructed telegraph wire (25).[6]

[6] Jean-Jacques Rousseau—whom Isaiah Berlin considers the father of Romanticism—overturned the negative connotation of the word "reverie" when his *Reveries of a Solitary Walker* was posthumously published in 1782 (Berlin 7; Damrosch 481). The book is made up of a series of internal ruminations over the course of ten different walks, and whose language is imbued with musicality. Therefore, there are echoes between Rousseau's *Reveries* and Thoreau's journals.

Similar to *Empfindungsweise* is William Blake's concept of double vision. Like Schiller and other German Idealists, Blake too resisted the "wicked work of unimaginative killers of the human spirit such as mathematicians and scientists" (Berlin 50). In an untitled letter poem addressed to Thomas Butts on November 22, 1802, Blake warns, "[…]May God us keep / From Single vision & Newtons sleep" (87-88). This single vision characterized by "Newtons sleep" means a devoutly scientific worldview by which perception exists only in the human realm and effectively amputates humans from our souls and Nature. What Blake offers as the alternative to the Newtonian single vision is double vision, or the ability to simultaneously perceive physically and spiritually. He explains,

> For double the vision my Eyes do see
> And a double vision is always with me
> With my inward Eye 'tis an old Man grey
> With my outward a Thistle across my way. (Blake, "To Thomas" 27-30)

Double vision is his brand of *Empfindungsweise*, because Blake as a naïve poet perceives himself concurrently as autonomous and part of Nature; he simultaneously experiences his own physicality using his "inward Eye" and the natural world of the thistle.[7] Consequently, double vision is a method by which someone could tune herself into Nature's frequency, so they experience life with physical and spiritual sense perceptions.

Both Schiller's and Blake's concepts of perception point to spontaneity, which, as previously stated, is a central principle of Romanticism as well as its more modern successor, electric Romanticism. According to Blake, spontaneity is what happens when "the notion that man has a body distinct from his soul, is to be expunged" (*Marriage* 188). Ralph Waldo Emerson presents his own version of *Empfindungsweise* and double vision through the

[7] It is significant to note that elsewhere Blake writes, "And a fourfold vision is given to me / Tis fourfold in my supreme delight," but Northrop Frye clarifies, "a double-double or fourfold vision[…]is still essentially twofold" (Blake 84-85; Frye 23).

vocabulary of an early electric Romanticism in his seminal essay, *Nature*, a fundamental work in the foundation of an American Romanticism. Such as in other achievements of Romantic philosophy that theorize the relation of mind or self to an externalized natural world, in *Nature*, Emerson expounds upon a mode of perception that yokes body and soul, and thereby yokes humans to the Divine (Chai xi). He explains, "Standing on the bare ground,—my head bathed by blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space,—all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eye-ball. I am nothing. I see all. The currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or particle of God" (Emerson, *Nature* 127-128). The transparent eyeball is a mode of perception beyond the five senses, on the level of soul. Similar to how Thoreau interprets the technology of the telegraph wire with a Romantic perspective, Emerson translates "acoustic" notions like Schiller's *Empfindungsweise* and Blake's double vision with a modernized vocabulary contemporary to a sociocultural reality with widespread awareness of Benjamin Franklin's research on electricity. In this early example of electric Romanticism, Emerson fuses scientific language to transcendental concepts. This fusion is paradoxical within an "acoustic" Romanticism, which predated the democratic access to science and scientific vocabulary, which was set into motion by the Enlightenment that I have previously mentioned Romanticism reacted against. Because we must credit the universality of language such as "currents" and "particle" Enlightenment-based science and its byproducts, such as the hyper-rational scientific method, this passage in *Nature* is exemplary of how electric Romanticism evolves from its forebear.

The transparent eyeball is a mode of perception that aligns the otherwise analytical human mind with its intuition, or spontaneous faculty, which Emerson writes about five

years after *Nature* in "Self-Reliance." It is almost as if he mindfully expands upon Blake's notion of double vision:

> […T]hat source, at once the essence of genius, the essence of virtue, and the essence of life, which we call Spontaneity or Instinct. We denote this primary wisdom as Intuition, whilst all later teaching are tuitions. In that deep force, the last fact behind which analysis cannot go, all things find their common origin. For the sense of being which in calm hours rises, we know not how, in the soul, is not diverse from things, from space, from light, from time, from man, but one with them, and proceedeth obviously from the same source from whence their life and being also proceedeth. (Emerson, "Self" 327)

For Emerson, the transparent eyeball is a method to access intuition or our spontaneous faculty, which is our ingrained and most essential teacher that illuminates the willing pupil with lessons beyond human analysis, because it is the "deep force" that binds us to the universe, thereby rendering us "part or particle of God." To engage in spontaneity, regardless of which name one gives the mode of perception, is to fully engage in a body-mind connection. As Blake famously wrote in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, the process requires one to cleanse their "doors of perception"—or to open her transparent eyeball—so that "every thing appear[s] to man as it is, Infinite" (188).

In our contemporary colloquialization of the concept, to act spontaneously is to act impulsively without premeditation. The impulse does not materialize from nothing but is a result of body-mind synchrony. Spontaneity is etymologically rooted in the Latin *sponte*, which means "of one's accord, willingly," and its use dates back to Cicero's letters ("Spontaneous"). In Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in a section on medical treatments and in Plato's *Republic* when the philosophers discuss word and deed, the spontaneous is juxtaposed with the artificial. Therefore, some of the earliest recorded uses of spontaneity account for its derivation from an innate impulse that occurs naturally rather than from contrived or artificial means.

However, despite the definition of its etymological forebear, *sponte*, one must not simply conflate the spontaneous with voluntary willpower. In chapter five of *Biographia Literaria*, Coleridge highlights the philosophic tradition that separates the spontaneous from the voluntary in a tripart philosophic arrangement of our mental faculties:

> A still finer distinction was soon established between the voluntary and the spontaneous[…]Our inward experiences were thus arranged in three separate classes, the passive sense, or what the School-men call the merely receptive quality of the mind; the voluntary; and the spontaneous, which holds the middle place between both. (Coleridge, *Biographia* 207)

Somewhere between the passive and the voluntary "classes" is the spontaneous, which is neither passive, or "merely [the] receptive quality of the mind," nor voluntary will. Coleridge expands upon this analysis of spontaneity in chapter twelve, wherein he defines the voluntary faculty as an artificial facet of consciousness marked by freedom, and positions spontaneous consciousness as anterior to the voluntary. He explains that the spontaneous is "natural to all reflecting beings[…]exclusively the domain of pure philosophy, which is therefore properly entitled transcendental" (Coleridge, *Biographia* 283). Here again, the spontaneous is juxtaposed with "mere reflection and re-presentation," and instead spontaneity is bound to the transcendental (283).

Victor Cousin further defines the connection between spontaneity—or the faculty he refers to as spontaneous reason—as characteristically transcendental in his philosophical system. Cousin is a scant mentioned French Idealist philosopher who lived contemporaneously with Emerson. Though, Emerson "spoke scornfully" of Cousin because the school of Eclecticism he founded cherry-picks theories according to what aligns with and what does not. Nonetheless, in his 2007 book *American Transcendentalism: A History*, Philip F. Gura resuscitates Cousin's significance to nineteenth century philosophy,

particularly his significance for Transcendentalism. Gura reminds us that Transcendentalists Alexander H. Everett, George Ripley, and Orestes Brownson identified Cousin as instrumental in the formation of Transcendentalism, as they were influenced by Cousin's notion that a person's intuition, which allows direct access to the Divine. Specifically, Everett identified the French Idealist as instrumental in the formation of Transcendentalism because Cousin offered "under the banner of eclecticism, a method of accepting the Kantian metaphysics without altogether rejecting the sensationalism of Locke and the Enlightenment" (28). While we only have fragments of Cousin's philosophy, he quite clearly elaborates on his theory of the two-fold development of reason, for which he differentiates between the spontaneous and the reflective.[8] Succinctly, "spontaneous reason" or "spontaneous intuition," sometimes even referred to as "spontaneous apperception," is what "acquaints us with the true and essential nature of things," and what connects human intuitive knowledge to the pantheistic universe (Gura 13).

Cousin's philosophy carries echoes of the tripartite arrangement Coleridge records in *Biographia Literaria*, and spontaneous reason reverberates with Emerson's transparent eyeball, Blake's double vision, and Schiller's *Empfindungsweise*, because spontaneous reason is a perceiving faculty that puts humans into communication "with the truths that depend upon neither the world nor me," the truths outside of the individual's subjective experience (Cousin 47). Also like the others, Cousin expounds upon the fact that spontaneity resides in a transcendental space, because spontaneous reason is that sphere of reason that stems from the soul and is intrinsically tied to an objective entity that transcends human individuality, as

[8] The anonymous authors grouped under the authorial title, "Princeton Review," who wrote "Transcendentalism" in *Theological Essays* explain clearly that Cousin's philosophy comes to us by way of fragments. We have enough, but we cannot assume to comprehend his philosophical system in its entirety due to the fragmentary nature of what is accessible.

it contains "a bearing superior to experience" (Cousin 47). Any human individuality stems from reflective reason, which develops subsequent to the spontaneous. Cousin explains that subjective identity forms as consciousness engages in reflective reason. Therefore, reflective reason is the seat of individuality, as it casts light upon reality, but it is not where creativity emerges from (Princeton 632).

Before the formation of the reflective, spontaneous reason exists as an impersonal, objective entity: "it belongs to no individual rather than another without the compass of humanity; it belongs not even to humanity itself" (Cousin qtd. in Ripley 129). The anonymous authors grouped under the authorial title, "Princeton Review," who wrote "Transcendentalism" in *Theological Essays* explain Cousin's spontaneous reason as that which

> seizes upon truth at first sight; comprehends and receives it, without asking why it does so. It is independent of the will, and therefore impersonal. It does not belong to us: though in us, it is not of us, it is not ours. It is absolute, and gives pure truth, and in all men the same truth. But in the reflective reason, our own voluntary activity is concerned, and here is found the source of difference and error. (Princeton 632-633)

Reflective reason, where "our own voluntary activity is concerned" sounds like the voluntary class Coleridge writes about. Curiously, both Coleridge and Cousin characterize the spontaneous as a faculty anterior to the reflective or voluntary spheres; hence my earlier description of spontaneity as ante-rational, rather than antirational. Cousin further explains that spontaneous reason is marked by primitivism. The notion of primitivism is a central one, because according to Cousin, within spontaneous reason flows the Divine breath, which is suppressed as reason crosses the threshold from spontaneous to reflective (634). Subjective identity forms as consciousness engages in reflection, so before this artificial formation, spontaneous reason exists as an impersonal, objective entity. Cousin elsewhere presents children as exemplary models of those who experience life solely using spontaneous

reason, which points to Blake's and the Romantics' views of children as pure beings who live in an undifferentiated state with Nature, who enact body-soul synchrony, who live according to spontaneity.

Because spontaneous reason is tethered to a transcendental reality beyond the individual, it contrasts with voluntariness, which is similar to Coleridge's explanation. Cousin suggests that there is a reality beyond matter—much like Thoreau's "higher, infinitely higher, planes of life"—and this immaterial reality cannot be perceived by our limiting five senses (59). Like the transparent eyeball, double vision, and *Empfindungsweise*, Cousin's spontaneous reason is the human faculty that allows us access to the Divine, or what Emerson refers to as the Over-Soul, the supreme soul, the divine spark shared by every living being.[9] In the Notes section of his *Philosophical Miscellanies*, Ripley adds to Cousin's exposition of spontaneous reason, explaining that every expression of faith, every religious emotion, or "inspiration accompanied with enthusiasm," are products of spontaneous reason, so that everything containing a lyric element (e.g. hymns, litanies) is an "intensity of truth" generated by the faculty of spontaneous reason (275). In Cousin's terms, the human soul is poetical, and in every age, there appear prophetic utterances in lyrical forms that originate in the spontaneous sphere of reason (151). He lends credence to the fact that poetry written by someone with access to spontaneous reason is inherently prophetic. Similarly, according to Emerson in *The Poet*: "The poet does not wait for the hero or the sage"; instead, the poet draws from "that region where the air is music," and "he announces that which no man foretold," because "he is the true and only doctor; he knows and tells; he is the only teller or

[9] Emerson explains the Over-Soul as "that Unity[…]within which every man's particular being is contained and made one with all other; the common heart" (Emerson, "The Over-Soul").

the news, for he was present and privy to the appearance which he describes" (Emerson, *The Poet* 297). Therefore, spontaneity entails a quality indisputably prophetic in nature.

Both Cousin and Emerson seem to agree with Schiller's differentiation between the naïve and sentimental poets. Rather than add value to either dichotomous category of poets, the central understanding of sentimental poets as those who are "filtered by intellect"—or, in Cousin's terms, a product of reflective reason—is more relevant to this discussion, which focuses on poets Schiller would classify as naïve (Schiller 12). Because naïve poets are marked by spontaneity and immediacy and bring to utterance transcendental truths, their poetry is prophetic in nature; because their poetry is produced in the sphere of spontaneous reason, it emits from a divine space (12, 13). For Romantics, who in large part held a pantheistic worldview, the concept of the divine is more aligned with a perspective of Nature in a spiritual sense rather than that funneled through organized religion. To engage in spontaneity—regardless of which name one gives the mode of perception—is to fully engage in a mind-body connection, such that the human individual is a part of instead of apart from Nature.

Because Wordsworth and Coleridge's Romanticism is a product of not only German Idealism but also French Revolutionary ideals, it is a movement made up of naïve poets who responded to social crises with radical poetics. The exercise of spontaneity is a radical poetic device; not only does it assist in the poet's engagement with the Divine, but it also resists against contemporary modes of poetry. For example, while the Metaphysical poets used colloquial diction to philosophize poetically, a tradition the Romantics extended, their seventeenth-century style is metrically rigid and far more calculated with its use of conceits and presentation of wit. Conversely, Romanticism borrows from its German Idealist

progenitor the prioritization and poetic enactment of free expression of the uninhibited feelings of an individual's subjectivity. Schiller's concepts of the naïve class of poets and "From tranquil and distance recollection is poetry made" evolved into Wordsworth's famous line from the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, "I have said that poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility" (Schiller qtd. in Kooey 37; Wordsworth). Many of the tenets of Romanticism successfully migrated to the United States because the egalitarian perspective they are founded on aligns with American ideals such as the universalization of liberty and justice. Spontaneity in particular thrived after its emigration Stateside, particularly in the later phase of the American Renaissance, which is mediated through Emerson's vision, a category under which Thoreau and Walt Whitman fall (Chai 7).

Instead of "naïve poet," Whitman presented himself as a prophet-poet, which is similar to Schiller's concept, but in Whitman's post-Darwinian mentality this meant prophesying the natural world rather than revealing the divine in the religious sense (LeMaster). Whitman subscribed to the Hebrew Bible's concept of prophet, which, as he explicates in an excerpt from *Specimen Days*, is not simply one who predicts, but instead one who can help remedy social crises by revealing in his poetry insight accessed by engaging with spontaneity. In "Death of Thomas Carlyle," he elucidates,

> The word prophecy is much misused; it seems narrow'd to prediction merely. That is not the main sense of the Hebrew word translated "prophet;" it means one whose mind bubbles up and pours forth as a fountain, from inner, divine spontaneities revealing God. Prediction is a very minor part of prophecy. The great matter is to reveal and outpour the God-like suggestions pressing for birth in the soul. (887-888)[10]

[10] He echoed these sentiments in "Slang in America," in which he expounds upon the notion of language as a "vast living body, or perennial body of bodies," whose changes occur democratically (1165).

"[I]nner, divine spontaneities revealing God" sounds religious; however, J. R. LeMaster clarifies that Whitman's zealousness did not stem from revealed religion, but instead from natural religion supported by science. Whitman, who viewed himself as a Hebraic prophet-poet (similar to Blake), poetically preached love and democracy as remedies for an ante- and postbellum fractured Union (LeMaster).

A significant aspect of Whitman's prophetic poetics rests on spontaneity, which corresponds to European Romanticism funneled through the lens of Emersonian Transcendentalism. Whitman's emphasis on spontaneity and his understanding of the concept reverberates not only with Emerson but also Schiller, Blake, and Cousin. Edward W. Huffstetler highlights that while the word "spontaneous" only appears in three poems—"A Thought of Columbus," "Give Me the Splendid Silent Sun," and "Spontaneous Me"—the concept of spontaneity is central to Whitman's philosophy, whose nucleus is "the spontaneous interaction of the soul in its environment," which demands a body-mind synchrony that allows for the soul's interaction with Nature. "Spontaneous Me" comes closest to poetically encapsulating his philosophy on spontaneity. Throughout the poem, the speaker is part of a universal consciousness akin to Coleridge's One Life, Thoreau's lattice-work, and Emerson's Over-Soul. The speaker begins by asserting a unity with the environment around him, "Spontaneous me, Nature" (Whitman, "Spontaneous" 1). He refers to his natural surroundings as "The real poems" because, he glosses parenthetically, "(what we call poems being merely pictures)" (8). He demonstrates with double vision or the transparent eyeball that real poems are not only "The wet of the woods through the early hours" and "The smell of apples, aromas from crush'd sage-plant, mint, birch-bark," but also human expressions of love:

> The sensitive, orbic, underlapp'd brothers, that only privileged feelers may be intimate where they are,
> The curious roamer the hand roaming all over the body, the bashful withdrawing of flesh where the fingers soothingly pause and edge themselves,
> The limpid liquid within the young man,
> …
> The like of the same I feel, the like of the same in others,
> The young man that flushes and flushes, and the young woman that flushes and flushes. (Whitman, "Spontaneous" 18, 20, 25-27, 30-31)

Expressions of human eroticism are the height of body-mind synchrony, so acts of physical love make it possible for humans to act as spontaneously as whirling leaves, ripening walnuts, and "The pulse pounding through palms" (34). This is because coitus is a spontaneous function of Nature, whereby humans can communicate on the spiritual level. Throughout "Spontaneous Me," Whitman asserts that enacting "The oath of procreation" is what brings humans closest to Nature, because when humans express love physically is when body and mind meld, an environment created by spontaneity which renders possible for the soul to fully interact with its environment.

In "I Sing the Body Electric," another poem within the "Children of Adam" section of *Leaves of Grass*, Whitman discusses the interconnectedness of body and soul. Just as the poem is separated into parts that coalesce into a well-structured whole, so too do the aspects of the body, such as freckles, hips, arm pits, and other parts of the body catalogued in the ninth section merge to comprise beautiful individuals. Curiously, however, in the title of the poem Whitman describes the body as electric, the topic of which he "sings" throughout. Throughout its nine sections, never again does he mention electric or electricity, so the concept is a holistic one. Towards the end of section five, the speaker proclaims, "As I see my soul reflected in Nature / As I see through a mist, One with inexpressible completeness, saintly, beauty," and later, after the extensive catalog of body parts, the poem concludes "O I

say these are not the parts and poems of the body only, but of the soul, / O I say now these are the soul!" (Whitman, "I Sing" 5.21-22, 9.35-36). Therefore, the central theme is about how a body is electric because of its physical and spiritual synchrony. The body is the soul, which is a reflection of and reflected in Nature. For Whitman, a human interconnectedness with Nature—spontaneity—is what electrifies. Whitman is a poet of the body, so while his use of "electric" is evocative of the vocabulary of an electric Romanticism, his enactment of spontaneity aligns more with its function in the more original "acoustic" Romanticism. Nonetheless, similar to Thoreau whose musings on the telegraph wire inaugurated an electric Romanticism, Whitman's poeticized exploration of the interconnectedness of body and soul is central to electric Romanticism, whose central tenet is spontaneity.

II.

In "A Defence of Poetry," Percy Bysshe Shelley proclaims, "Every great poet must inevitably innovate upon the example of his predecessors in the exact structure of his peculiar versification." Throughout this dissertation, I trace the lineage of electric Romanticism nearly seventy years after Whitman to a coterie of mid-twentieth century poets and musicians who wield spontaneity in an age of technological advancements. The artists in focus "inevitably innovate upon the example of [their] predecessors," but they innovate along with technological advancements and the subsequent societal changes, some of which they help spur on. My inquiry begins with Beat writers Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg, both of whom were avid readers of Whitman as well as the other Romantic thinkers previously mentioned. While certain members of the literati may sneer at a concentrated focus on some of the original Beats such as Kerouac and Ginsberg, we must remember that they remain important because they "lit our for terra incognita" (Penman 144). In Ian

Penman's *It Gets Me Home, This Curving Track*, he explains that while the Beats may be considered over-canonized,

> it's easy to forget the reason they were elected figureheads in the first place: they sallied forth into the unknown and set about indexing the whole of American dreaming[…]Some of their takes on black culture may not strike us as risible and patronizing, and some of the quasi-religious holy-fool sub-notes feel a bit self-hypnotized (and on, and on); but at the time, they were navigating wholly without maps. (144)

Their status as figureheads of protest poetry, of socially realized literature that resists conformity in form and content, is embedded in their unique expressions of electric Romanticism. It is difficult to reconcile what we may now consider insensitive appropriations of Black culture and outright misogyny; however, it is all too easy to critique historical figures and movements with the privilege of retrospection. I make no apologies for their treatment of Black culture, their misogynistic tendencies, and more individual flaws, such as Kerouac's bigotry and Ginsberg's questionable association with NAMBLA (the North American Man/Boy Love Association). However, to vilify the Beats and cast their literature aside is to ignore their significance in what Ken Goffman and Dan Joy (*Counterculture Through the Ages: From Abraham to Acid House* (2002)) claim is the first wholesale countercultural movement, which was marked by radical innovations of art, science, and spirituality, diversity, authentic interpersonal contact and generosity, genuine democracy, and a transgressive move to drop out of conformist society (Goffman and Joy 33).

The Beat Generation extended Whitman's brand of American Romanticism to a post-Industrial Revolution, post-World War II age, and amplified it with an enthusiastic adherence to Arthur Rimbaud's poetics. Their New Vision, the Beat artistic manifesto, conceptually borrowed from William Butler Yeats' esoteric system of trance poetics, but is markedly influenced by Rimbaud's concept that through "un long, immense et raisonné

dérèglement de *tous les sens*" ("a long, gigantic and rational *derangement* of *all the senses*"), a poet can make herself a seer (Rimbaud, "15 May" 306, 307). While Rimbaud himself is remembered by history as "a teen-age rebel who mocked small-town conventionality[…]a would-be anarchist" who died all-too young, Rimbaud's positioning of the poet as seer—which is drawn from Romanticism and perhaps also from Friedrich Nietzsche's concept of the poet-philosopher—casts the poet into a category of sociopolitical importance that enlivened the Beats (Mendelsohn). As catalyzed by Rimbaud's work, the Beats pursued altered forms of consciousness for a hybrid spiritual, literary, and social purpose. The Beat Generation was a "'seeking' generation" that sought out forms of spirituality outside of organized religion, so their self-consciously devised literary movement was more than literary—it was a social, political, and spiritual movement that actively rebelled against conformist, mainstream social form, thought forms, and modes of thinking (Tonkinson 6; Ginsberg, *Best* 27). The New Vision encapsulates the Beats' collective desire to experientially and artistically achieve Supreme Reality, their term for universal consciousness that harkens back to Coleridge's One Life, Thoreau's "lattice-work," and Emerson's Over-Soul. Essentially, the New Vision asserts that self-expression is the foremost purpose of art, and the writer's artistic creation draws from her own subjective experiences that reign all-important (Schumacher 34).

While only separated by less than a century, the Beats' Manhattan cityscape looked far different than Whitman's, in large part due to the evolution of technology. Therefore, Kerouac and Ginsberg's expressions of electric Romanticism are markedly different than that of their predecessors. They had access to cars and audio recorders, which they used to capture immediacy, to write spontaneously in a more genuine fashion than Whitman ever

could have. While Kerouac eventually proved himself a product of his provincial upbringing—as he ended up bigoted, living with his mother, and fully consumed by alcoholism—his fascination bordering on obsession with Black culture and its avant-garde music led him to establish an innovative approach to achieving spontaneity in writing, which he had been theorizing as early as he and his friends designed the New Vision. In my first chapter, "'Through the Keyhole of His Eye': I Think of Jack Kerouac, I Even Think of Jack Kerouac's Spontaneous Bop Prosody," I explore the evolution of his spontaneous prose style that Ginsberg dubbed "spontaneous bop prosody," which is presented in *On the Road* and perfected in *Visions of Cody*.

What Kerouac set into motion, Ginsberg expands upon. In my second chapter, "Where Are We Going, Allen Ginsberg? Which Way Does Your Beard Point Tonight?"—whose title riffs on his poem "Supermarket in California" about Whitman—I trace the trajectory of Ginsberg's spontaneous poetics, which is self-consciously prophetic in nature. Ginsberg's version of electric Romanticism is born from what Julie Carr and Jeffrey C. Robinson refer to as active Romanticism, which, succinctly, is a poetic response to sociopolitical crises. Ginsberg identified spontaneity as a way to inhabit the liminal space between the human and the Divine, which would provide him with the means to create prophetic poetry that inhabits Carr and Robinson's category of active Romanticism. The chapter is organized chronologically, as he attempted to write genuinely spontaneous prophetic poetry in the fifteen years following a significant visionary experience in 1948, but only felt as though he succeeded in the mid-1960s when he engaged in the method of spontaneous composition he developed, auto-poesy, whose "auto" simultaneously connotes automatic and automobile.

I then pivot my inquiry to focus on Bob Dylan, who many consider a Beat poet in his own right. Specifically, during his visionary period from 1965-1966, Dylan applied a Rimbaudian visionary poetics funneled through the Beats' New Vision to create what he referred to as his 'vision music'. His employment of visionary poetics and a spontaneous method of composition divorce him from the earlier portion of his career, which is characterized by his engagement with the folk revival movement. Throughout both chapters on Dylan—"'Another Match, Go Start Anew': Bob Dylan's Visionary Period," Sides One and Two—I trace how his controversial shift from acoustic to electric music helps shape rock, an evolutionary branch off of rock 'n' roll. Dylan's rock still protests, albeit far differently than the way he protested in his folk music. In an effort to escape and rebel against conformity, he breaks free the folk movement, whose overt form of protest he did not think works in the radically changed paradigm of the mid-1960s. His brand of spontaneously composed visionary poetics "inevitably innovate[s] upon the example of his predecessors," but with idiosyncratic versification that helped shape the counterculture, the hippie revolution.

Thus far, my areas of focus are male artists who write in a modern category of Romanticism I designate as electric. Each writer I have discussed, from the "acoustic" Romantics to Thoreau and his telegraph wire to Kerouac, Ginsberg, and Dylan all interact with spontaneity in their writing or, in Dylan's case, music. In the late 1960's, Janis Joplin modified electric Romanticism, as she embodied it. My final chapter, "'Work Me, Lord': Janis Joplin's Kozmic Blues" considers Joplin's fusion of feminism and electric Romanticism in what she refers to as kozmic blues, her version of female blues music weaved into 1960's psychedelic rock that hinges on the spontaneous feedback loop between performer and

audience. I analyze how she embodies electric Romanticism, as she functions like the hippie æolian harp, and use Hélène Cixous' feminist theory on women's insurgence into male-dominated fields to shape my inquiry on Joplin's deployment of her voice, emotions, and body in her performance.

"Through the Keyhole of His Eye": I Think of Jack Kerouac, I Even Think of Jack Kerouac's Spontaneous Bop Prosody

"The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom."

~William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*

I.

Ever since his saintly older brother, Gerard died at the age of nine, Jack Kerouac gravitated towards intimate homosocial relationships with men who reminded him of his sibling's imagined Buddha-like nature.[11] When he was sixteen, convinced he was the only "mortal soul" in Lowell, Massachusetts, Kerouac met Sebastian "Sammy" Sampas (Kerouac, *The Town* 54). Sampas possessed Gerard's moral idealism and was prone to guilt like Kerouac; he was a gloomy poet type who wrote politically conscious verse, and he transmitted to Kerouac his essential desire to cultivate a Byronic lifestyle (McNally 24). Both teens had vibrant romantic adolescent imaginations; together they rejected Lowell's materialistic mundanity and exercised their energy on writing and on reading Keats and other Romantics. They formed a radical reading group they called Prometheus that focused on social change (25). After Kerouac moved to New York City to attend Horace Mann School and then Columbia University, they remained dear friends—soul brothers, in fact—but in

[11] Gerard has been described by those who knew him and wise and angelic (McNally 5). As Kerouac learned more about Buddhism, he aligned memories of his brother with his apprehension of the Buddha, which is how Gerard can be both saintly and Buddha-like (Clark 148). Later in this chapter, I further discuss how Kerouac reconciled Catholicism and Buddhism.

1944, Sampas died gallantly as a corpsman and war poet at the Anzio front in Italy (McNally 60).[12]

Shortly after pacing those frigid February New York City streets in grief upon learning of the untimely death of another of his "brothers," Kerouac was introduced to Lucien Carr. Unlike Kerouac, Carr was extroverted, hyper-confident, and from upper-class St. Louis. He resembled Arthur Rimbaud, whom he read dedicatedly, and he too jettisoned all rules and conventions like the French rebel poet (62). In the Summer of 1944, Kerouac also met Allen Ginsberg, whom he perceived as "exalted" much like Gerard and Sampas (Kerouac, *The Town* 365). The threesome—Kerouac, Carr, and Ginsberg—created their own reading and discussion group that functioned like a more cosmopolitan version of Prometheus, but instead of merely rejecting society's arbitrary conventions and writing each other poetry, they developed their own artistic manifesto they called the New Vision based on Rimbaud's poetics. They lived by Gustave Flaubert's words quoted in Delmore Schwartz's 1939 Introduction to Rimbaud's *A Season in Hell*: "When the exterior world is disgusting, enervating, corruptive, and brutalizing, honest and sensitive people are forced to seek somewhere within themselves a more suitable place to live" (16). What they sought within themselves was art created solely by perception and experience, which was their answer to Rimbaud's question in *A Season in Hell*: "Where shall we go beyond the shores and the mountains, to salute the birth of the new work, and the new wisdom, the flight of tyrants and demons, the end of superstition, and be the first to worship Christmas on earth?" ("Morning" 207). They discussed this question in all-night talk sessions spurred on by coffee

[12] The *Puptent Poets of the Stars and Stripes Mediterranean* (2002) anthology includes two of Sampas' poems: "Taste of Nightbane" and "Cote D'Or".

and cigarettes, and they decided that like Rimbaud they too rejected science. Instead, they claimed, "We are moving toward the *Spirit*" (Rimbaud, "Bad Blood" 177).

Inspired by Rimbaud, William Butler Yeats, and Charles Baudelaire, they focused solely on what they perceived, because they sought to create art that was guided by sensual perceptions that appealed to unconscious emotions rather than to intellect (McNally 66). They abandoned politics and religion for beauty, and since God—the creator of beauty—was dead in the Nietzschean sense and since Nature was not "real," they focused on "the transcendental *act* of making art more than beauty of the product" (66). They abandoned politics and religion because they were responding to the psychic crisis of the corrupt, war-torn world in which they were living. However, the act of turning away from politics and religion to respond to sociocultural crises is in fact an active protest against their contemporary political and religious landscape.

The New Vision is a poetic manifesto enlivened by a spirit of protest. As Ginsberg elucidates in a journal entry from April 1945: "New vision lies in a highly conscious comprehension of universal motives, and in a realistic acceptance of an unromantic universe of flat meaninglessness" (qtd. in McNally 66). Kerouac's autobiographical reflection in *The Town and the City* (1950), his first published novel that chronicles this period, pairs well with Ginsberg's explanation: "Mighty world events meant virtually nothing to him, they were not real enough, and he was certain that his wonderful joyous visions of super-spiritual existence and great poetry were 'realer than all'" (Kerouac; *The Town* 274).[13] Armed with knowledge stemming from a "realistic acceptance of an unromantic universe of flat meaninglessness," they turned their attention to "joyous visions of super-spiritual existence…'realer than all'"

[13] Here, the omniscient narrator is speaking about Peter Martin, Kerouac's avatar in the roman à clef.

(Ginsberg qtd. in McNally 66; Kerouac, *The Town* 274). There exists an undoubtedly transcendental, visionary aspect to the subject of their focus, which Ginsberg eventually refers to as Supreme Reality. While I delve even further into the transcendental aspect in my next chapter, what I concentrate on in this chapter is the coterie's cultivation of a poetics of presence[14]—by way of Kerouac's compositional evolution towards his spontaneous bop prosody—which entails a rejection of politics and overall mainstream society, as well as a reformulation of what it means to write spontaneously.

The New Vision was their radical artistic statement that advocated for experience and repudiated conventional morality in the wake of the "corruptive and brutalizing" world in which they lived (Warner 24; Flaubert qtd. in Schwartz 16). Central to their poetic philosophy was a declaration to create art in which they revealed their deepest secrets. Retrospectively, such a confessional mode may be said to define much of Beat counterculture (Goffman and Joy 33). They collectively viewed life as an existential project and therefore self-consciously sought to create art that could simultaneously be thought of as aesthetic artifacts *and* documents of experience and experimentation (Mortenson 10).[15] Together with their friend and quasi-teacher William S. Burroughs,[16] the coterie cultivated an intersubjective aesthetic revolving around spontaneous composition. Using spontaneous

[14] This phrase is used to characterize Beat poetics by several scholars, namely Daniel Belgrad and Erik Mortenson. "Poetics of presence" signifies the Beats' spontaneous response to the material conditions of each passing moment (Mortenson 1).

[15] French Existentialism's perspective on human life as a blank slate surrounded by meaninglessness was imbued in the Beat worldview (Goffman and Joy 232).

[16] Burroughs had known Carr and Carr's stalker David Kammerer in St. Louis, so when they moved to New York City, Burroughs followed. While he was considerably older than the threesome, he was a close friend and played the role of teacher and sometimes even psychoanalyst. Years later, he would be involved romantically with Ginsberg, who was instrumental in the publication of Burroughs' novel *Junkie* (1953). Prior to this, Burroughs co-wrote *And the Hippos Were Boiled in Their Tanks* with Kerouac in 1945, but it was only published in 2008. He is remembered as a primary figure in the Beat Generation and also the grandfather of the punk movement.

composition to create art that captures immediacy—a term used by Erik Mortenson in his *Capturing the Beat Moment: Cultural Politics and the Poetics of Presence*—was a direct attempt to make sense of a lived experience that was so marked by change and flux (Mortenson 6). In other words, spontaneous prosody was a weapon they wielded against the morally corrupt socio-psychological climate imposed by the Cold War establishment (Belgrad 198). Additionally, the essential nature of spontaneous composition resisted anything the prevailing school of New Criticism deemed "well crafted" (198). The coterie considered spontaneous acts requisite for truly experiencing life and for creating art that satisfied the New Vision. Spontaneity, they believed, integrated conscious and unconscious experience. This conviction is supported by German Idealist and Romantic philosophic inquiries into spontaneity. However, the Beats augmented the nineteenth century version of spontaneity with a degree of absurdity first instigated by Dadaists and Surrealists. Carr, who exemplified the role of experiencer, was fond of what André Gide called *actes gratuits*, absurd and spontaneous displays that resolutely shattered middle-class conventions (McNally 67).[17] Indeed, Carr was famous for eating glass at Burroughs' apartment one night (67).[18]

The spontaneous aesthetic, which was prevalent in 1940's avant-garde music and art, was rooted in philosophical concerns that implied political implications, rather than explicitly

[17] The concept of using absurdity along with spontaneity to thwart conventionality is a hyperbolic interpretation of the Romantic philosophy of spontaneity imbued with opaque shades of Surrealism and Dadaism, both of which originate from the same reaction against World War I in 1910's France. According to André Breton's *Manifesto of Surrealism*, the movement is founded upon the notion of a "surreality," the reconciliation of the dream plane and the physical reality we experience "which are seemingly so contradictory into a kind of absolute reality, a *surreality*" (10). Surrealist works of art fuse the strange with the otherwise realistic as an act of revolution. Surrealism evolved from the contemporaneous Dadaism, which outright rejects Capitalism's logic and reason, and instead exhibit nonsense and irrationality as overt protest of sociocultural conventions that allows for violence and war.

[18] Thwarting middle-class conventions and acting spontaneously eventually landed Carr in prison for murdering his stalker David Kammerer with a boy scout knife (Clark 63).

engaging in topical politics (Belgrad 2). Part of the coterie's rejection of middle-class American ideals and mainstream society's arbitrary conventions was their interest in those *outside* of this system. Burroughs introduced them to Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West*, a lengthy two-volume historical argument about the destiny of cultures and civilizations that contains shades of Marxism.[19] For Spengler, culture is creative and expands into civilization; upon reaching the point of civilization, a culture ceases to be creative. Spengler's system is organic and cyclical, as he explains that all civilizations eventually die out, like Greek culture growing into Roman civilization or "Imperium," which then "dwindled, quickly and wholesale," and "the whole pyramid of cultural man vanishes…At the last, only the primitive blood remains, alive, but robbed of its strongest and most promising elements. This residue is the *Fellah type*" (Spengler 105). Spengler characterizes the "*Fellah type*" or the fellaheen as "a people *before* the dawn of Culture…the primitive people, surviving when the form of the nation had passed away again" (184). The "*Fellah*" are an ahistorical people who thrive as outliers to a culture or civilization and remain after civilizations die out and as a new culture develops. Because the fellaheen are people outside of history, they are unshackled to any given society's arbitrary rules and are therefore free to be themselves (Ginsberg, *Best* 405). While none of the members of the coterie counted as fellaheen—as they represent varieties of middle class America—they romanticized and beatified the concept, and they considered the fellaheen filled with "a deep piety that fills the waking-consciousness…the native belief…that there is some sort of mystic constitution of actuality" (Tonkinson 12). Kerouac and Ginsberg both considered jazz a fellaheen sound, and Henry David Thoreau's Walden experiment as a fellaheen-like rejection of civilization (McNally 156, 179). Thoreau is of

[19] It is important to note that Spenglerism also prefigures a German nationalism that culminated in Nazism.

course not fellaheen, but his experiment to drop out of society and live rustically in his cabin is an endeavor to live like the fellaheen. It was perhaps Thoreau who inspired Kerouac to write of his *On the Road* avatar Sal Paradise's brief attempt to settle down with Terry and her son and work as a cotton picker in Sabinal, Texas.

According to the coterie's understanding of Spengler, the fellaheen are instinctive, guided by intuition, "tuned in with the cosmic beat," and lack a sense of nationhood (Clark 5). This concept resonated deeply with each member who felt rejected by society in their individual ways. In 1945, Burroughs befriended Herbert Huncke, a petty criminal and morphine junkie who haunted Times Square; with his "Arab eyes" he personified the fellaheen and was immediately thrust into Beat sainthood (83). The Beats viewed Huncke's criminal world—the sleazy bars dotted with unsavory characters—as fellaheen because it functioned outside of mainstream society. After all, the criminal underbelly of a society has its own procedures and practices independent of society and is likely to exist beyond normative social mores. Huncke used the slang word "beat," which stuck with the group. It meant "beat" as in "beat down," a carnival, subterranean subcultural term meaning without money and without a place to stay, but also

> exhausted, at the bottom of the world, looking up or out, sleepless, wide-eyed, perceptive, rejected by society, on your own, streetwise…'Open,' as in Whitmanic sense of 'openness,' equivalent to humility, and so it was interpreted into various circles to mean both emptied out, exhausted, and at the same time with open—perceptive and receptive to a vision. (Ginsberg, *Best* 2)

Kerouac and Ginsberg adopted the word, using it along with other neologisms, and eventually the group would be referred to as the Beat Generation.[20] The concept of being 'beat down' and simultaneously beatific and beatified, added by Kerouac with his regard for

[20] While Beat Generation is a term that undeniably originates with Kerouac, John Clellon Holmes's *Go!* (1952) is the first piece of literature that popularized the term.

Catholic traditions, is central to the sociocultural function of the Beats in the subcultural, countercultural sense.

It is important to stress that although they romanticized the fellaheen and strove towards values believed to be inherent in the fellaheen, such as genuine spirituality as opposed to the pieties of organized religion, the Beats were not fellaheen themselves. Just like Sal who attempts to live as a cotton picker and care for Terry and her son, but who ultimately ends up escaping back to his East coast comforts, the Beats came from a milieu of privilege and elitism. Unlike immigrant laborer Terry in her Sabinal shanty, Sal has socioeconomic privilege as well as his friends' and aunt's financial support. No matter how poor the Beats became in their quest to be like the fellaheen,[21] they simply were never fellaheen, because even fringe members of a society are entrenched in the society. Therefore, while they aspired to create experiences that mimicked the fellaheen lifestyle, their position within society as social outliers is central to their establishment of counterculture, because the very definition of counterculture requires activity from members *within* a society to rebel. Moreover, as Ken Goffman and Dan Joy explain in their book *Counterculture Through the Ages: From Abraham to Acid House*, the formation of any countercultural movement is elitist in nature, because in separating oneself from the democratic masses, the freethinking nonconformist scorns what they have left behind (55). Criticizing the masses is elitist:

> Indeed, the very name counterculture implies a thrust in opposition to the presumed popular culture of the people. And anytime someone stands up and says, 'I think all your commonly accepted and treasured beliefs are bunk and I might have a better approach,' she is scorning the common folk to some degree. (55)

[21] Caroline Bird's *Harper's Bazaar* article, which I mention on page 12, explains of the Hipsters' romanticization of poverty, "It would not be altogether facetious to say that the old urge to keep up with the Joneses has been replaced by the need to keep *down* with the Joneses" (qtd. in Goffman and Joy 106).

In an epoch marked by grave sociopolitical instability and existential threats in the form of nuclear warfare, such scorn seems commonsensical. The Beats' revolt against the mainstream by performing spontaneity in their lifestyles and their art—both of which are tethered as per the New Vision—and their version of "better approach" was the fellaheen life, which they venerated. Aside from fraternizing with Huncke in the criminal underbelly of Manhattan, in their rebellion the Beats listened to jazz, which they perceived as a fellaheen sound and some eventually adopted Buddhism, which they saw as a fellaheen religion. However, like Thoreau and his short-lived experiment at Walden Pond, they were never *of* the fellaheen because the countercultural enterprise must bubble up from within the normative culture itself (Clark 135).

II.

Before he was conscripted in 1944, Lester "Prez" Young's tenor saxophone was the vanguard of the Count Basie Orchestra.[22] Young's was a "tighter, more laconic, yet more expressive sound…He played the blues" (McNally 38). His tenure with the Count Basie Orchestra offered the Prez groundbreaking opportunities, such as playing at Café Society, one of the first integrated night clubs, which opened late in 1938 (37). The Prez's sound was emblematic of a new movement in jazz that starkly opposed the white-appropriated swing which then was all the rage. Recordings of Young with Count Basie directly inspired the postwar sound revolution that came out of Minton's Playhouse in Harlem, where bebop was born.

[22] Billie "Lady Day" Holiday decided that since jazz already had a Duke (Ellington), an Earl (Hines), and a Count (Basie), and since Franklin D. Roosevelt was the most important man in America, that Lester Young should be the President or "Prez" for short.

Spearheaded by the Prez, Charlie "Bird" Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, and Thelonious Monk began playing a polyrhythmic, antiphonal version of jazz inflected by prosodic tones (Belgrad 180). The bebop band was the social and musical antithesis of the big band orchestra; as opposed to the big banders and their commercialized swing, bebop musicians did not simply play from sheet music, but instead practiced, or "woodshedded," in jam sessions, where improvisation was celebrated (184, 180). Their jam sessions refined their musical intelligence and cultivated the intersubjectivity that Daniel Belgrad claims lies at the heart of the culture of spontaneity. Intersubjectivity occurs when individual and community empower one another:

> Each presence enlivens the others, creating a whole that is animated by a collective energy without which the individual expression would not itself exist. There is no dichotomy pitting the individual against the group; to have a voice among other voices entails no fundamental conflict. Nor is unity of purpose enforced by a hierarchical authority structure. Intersubjectivity implies that participatory democracy is the form of political economy with the greatest vitality and the most musical powers. (191)

Thus understood, intersubjectivity has democratic overtones. However, since intersubjectivity insists that jazz musicians fuse their unique voices on behalf of a collective and improvisational polyphony, it is consequentially threatening on a social level, since there exists no societal system with principles that simultaneously "reward maximal individualism within the framework of spontaneous egalitarian interaction" (Szwed 588). Therefore, not only does bebop reject the mainstream in its reconfiguration of musical signatures, but also, its dependence on intersubjectivity rescripts the social significance of individualism and democracy. An individual's virtuosity is both spotlighted and woven into the collective sound. Additionally, each individual's exploration of prosody integrates mind and body.

Belgrad refers to this integration as "body-mind holism," which operates similar to Romantic concepts of spontaneity mentioned in my Overture.

Bebop is founded on the communicative power of the body; bop musicians fuse body and mind as they together explore "the realm of prosody: that boundary between ideas and feelings where music becomes an utterance, and words become pure sound" (Belgrad 214, 179). Bebop's body-mind holism functions ante-rationally, rather than anti-rationally, similar to the various Romantic notions of spontaneity previously outlined. Any perceived anti-intellectualism in bebop is all but feigned. When Parker admonished Sonny Criss in 1947, "Don't think. Quit thinking," his point was not for Criss to altogether cease putting thought into his saxophone playing, but instead to do the thinking prior to playing and to put in ample practice time so that in performances he could pull from the unconscious space (qtd. in Belgrad 184). "Don't think. Quit thinking" is Parker's insistence on Criss's spontaneity, which, as I show in my Overture, stems from our faculty of spontaneous reason—that sphere of reason that resides anterior to reflective reason, the latter of which is the seat of subjectivity—so claiming it is anti-rational is not accurate. Nonetheless, it is significant that mainstream society perceives the spontaneous aesthetic as anti-rational and anti-intellectual, because of its contradictions to conventional logic sequencing. Bebop bases itself on "nonverbal communication grounded in sensual perceptions," and was therefore considered an afront to the value system of Western corporate liberalism, which prioritizes thinking and order (Belgrad 190). As opposed to progress, machines, and human power, the bebop and its originator the blues are "freedom sounds," inspired by the various emotions embedded in the human voice (McNally 39). Unlike swing, which was appropriated by white culture because it was orderly and ideal for dancing and entertainment, bebop was "free-for-

all ad lib," the eruption of musicians' passion of expression from their souls and idiosyncratically curated by improvisation (McNally 38). Therefore, body-mind holism in tandem with intersubjectivity is how bebop radically opposed 1940's corporate-liberal culture (Belgrad 191).

The basis of bebop's sociopolitical import is not only the fact that it functions both intersubjectively and holistically, but also that it draws on the blues idiom. The sociopolitical implications of bebop are significant, because bebop emerges at a particular time when some African-Americans or Black Americans became members of the middle class (Jones 181-182). Bebop was their attempt to reincarnate the blues form, to reestablish the blues as the chief African American art form (194). The blues is the first popular Black American artistic expression, which was born in the plantations as a response to slavery; it is indicative of "the Negro's conscious appearance on the America scene" (xii). As Ralph Ellison remarks in his book *Shadow & Act*, the blues is as much ritual as it is poetry (256). That the blues and also jazz contain aspects of African music is key to the ritualistic nature Ellison speaks of, as the polyphonic rhythms may be traced back to the African use of drums for communication, and stands in contrast to European harmony and melody (Jones 26, 25). Ellison, whose *Shadow & Act* hybridizes literary and musical theory, explains: "Each poet creates his own language from that which he finds around him," so the blues arose from musical accompaniments to slaves' field hollers and groans (266; Jones 28). "Creat[ing] his own language from that which he [found] around him," the Prez performed the blues with his innovative saxophonic wails, which directly inspired Parker, Gillespie, and Monk. They too sought to sing the blues with their respective instruments. LeRoi Jones—who is remembered as a Beat poet as well as advocator and theorist of the Black Arts Movement (once he

changed his name to Amiri Baraka)—spotlights Parker in his book *Blues People* as a vital player in bebop, as he intentionally parodied the human voices' "cries, swoops, squawks, and slurs" with his alto sax (30).

In the Winter of 1939, Kerouac first experienced live jazz when he saw Jimmie Lunceford play at the Apollo (McNally 36). He became infatuated. Certainly, the music struck something in him, but there was also an invigorating unruliness he felt as he indoctrinated himself into the margin of white society that rejected racism and enjoyed jazz (36). Not only did he enjoy the music and the theory behind it, but jazz was a way for him to separate himself further from America's hyper-conformist society. By the time bebop was inaugurated in Minton's in the early 1940s, Kerouac was already a jazz aficionado. Bebop was nonconformist due to its cerebral density, rejection of standard rhythms, and inaccessible melodies. Such elements resisted incorporation by the mass media and resonated deeply with Kerouac (Warner 5). The Bird's brand of bebop was self-consciously subversive, which was apparent to Black and white audiences alike, and moved Kerouac so much so that years later when Parker died, Kerouac would write an elegiac poem that equates the Bird with Buddha (Thomas 292).

While it may seem repugnantly exoticizing and romanticizing for Kerouac and the Beats to have been so infatuated by bebop and Black culture, Kerouac and his friends recognized the profound social and musical implications of bebop. As Simon Warner explains, bebop was "a potent drug to the young Beats" (6). They, albeit naïvely, heard bebop as the sound of the fellaheen. And Kerouac experienced an immediate attraction to bebop's spontaneous prosody. Bebop, which allowed for and in fact demanded improvisation, stood in opposition to the mannered music he had previously been exposed

to and whose compositions were faithfully reproduced in performances as intended (Goffman and Joy 231). Bebop freed musicians and empowered individuals with self-expression (231). Parker's credo, "Music is your experience, your thoughts, your wisdom," encapsulates the bop subculture, which sought to express "the spontaneous wanderings of the mind and the infinite variability of the emotions through [the] horn" (qtd. in Goffman and Joy 231; Goffman and Joy 231).

Kerouac, thanks to his school mate Seymour Wyse, had been listening to jazz since his Horace Mann days, and turned his Columbia University friends on to the jazz world, which came alive at night in pockets of New York City rarely visited by the white or Jewish middle-class. These musical tourists were inspired by bebop performances, and also by the marijuana that encouraged the loosening of the rational mind (233). They were already theorizing the New Vision, which entailed spontaneous acts, the *actes gratuits*, so it was a logical leap towards cultivating a poetics of presence founded not simply on experience but on spontaneous experience. They recognized this spontaneity in bebop as one ingredient for radical social change (Belgrad 2-3). While they may not have immediately recognized bebop's spontaneity as the key ingredient they could infuse into their avant-garde literature, they did indeed identify body-mind holism and intersubjectivity as aspects of the music they could translate into their art.

Being a part of the jazz cult and becoming respectfully interested in Black culture was hip, and the Hipster predated the Beat (McNally 37). Hip began as a subversive intelligence wielded by Black Americans "to negotiate an alien landscape," which then succumbed to white imitation (Leland 6). Hipsterism at its core represents the dream of an America distinguished by racial fluidity; however, the reality of this dream was white hipsters

claiming moral high ground because of their interest in Black culture (6). Conventional society stereotyped hipsters as young, sullen and, as Caroline Bird complained in a 1957 *Harper's Bazaar* article,

> Inspired by the heady, spontaneous sounds of bebop[…]developing vaguely in parallel with the evolution of French Existentialism and its vision of human life as a blank state surrounded by a meaningless abyss, hipsters were furtive characters—the perfect rebels for a paranoid age. (qtd. in Goffman and Joy 232)

She was right in that they saw no hope for positive change, but she was wrong in her accusation that Hipsters, particularly those who were certainly categorized as Beats by 1957, had "no desire to confront the repressive political apparatus and w[ere] barely even interested in offending 'straight' conformists" (232). Remember that in 1945, Ginsberg reflects that the New Vision "lies in a highly conscious comprehension of universal motives, and in a realistic acceptance of an unromantic universe of flat meaninglessness," which Kerouac seems to respond directly to in *The Town and the City*, whose autobiographical protagonist turns his focus away from world events and onto poetry and "visions of super-spiritual existence" (Ginsberg qtd. in McNally 66; Kerouac, *The Town* 274). At its core, Hipsterism thrived on nuclear anxieties the straight, square masses were trying to repress (Goffman and Joy 233). The youth were hyper-aware of the fact that society teetered on the edge of apocalypse, as the advent of nuclear warfare made possible the eradication of life with the push of a button. Kerouac and Ginsberg's Beat brand of Hipsterism considered the principles governing bebop as opposed to the establishment's assertions of political stability (Thomas 292). Therefore, the Beats were responsible for elevating "jazz as an index of social protest to mystical proportions," and, taking a cue from Dylan Thomas' endeavors,[23] they

[23] In the 1940s, Dylan Thomas arrived in the United States, keen on establishing the idea that poetry was meant to be heard (Belgrad 218).

eventually popularized poetry readings, which functioned like jazz performances (Belgrad 292). The Beats became so synonymous with bebop that Richard Meltzer once compared Kerouac to Parker, "the meteoric alpha soloist…blowing chorus after chorus of personal asymmetries into art that was neither happy not sad," the self-promoting Ginsberg to Gillespie, "deceptively brilliant under the showman's spiel," and Burroughs to sphinxlike Monk, "deconstructing paragraphs rather than chords" (qtd. in Warner 6). Bebop's spontaneous prosody inflected their New Vision, their shared concept of creating literature drawn from spontaneous experience and experimentation, by which they endeavored to subvert corporate-liberal America. Thus, the Beat Generation was a self-consciously cultivated counterculture.

III.

After a few years of all-night Benzedrine- and marijuana-induced talk sessions, towards the end of 1946, Kerouac grew bored with his coterie's "tedious intellectualness" (Kerouac, *On* 7).[24] His father, who had recently died, used his deathbed as a platform to warn his son about Burroughs and Ginsberg (the latter of whom he referred to as "that cockroach," arguably due to the elder Kerouac's violent streak of antisemitism) (McNally 72). Kerouac was ready for a new brother, for new inspiration, and soon enough, Neal Cassady blew into his life like "the west wind, an ode from the Plains, something new, long prophesied long a-coming" (Kerouac, *On* 7-8). Hal Chase and Ed White—two Columbia friends from Denver—had shown the Beats letters by the glorified car thief. So, for some time before they met him, Kerouac and Ginsberg considered Cassady a walking legend, the kind of guy who took daily breaks from reform school and antics in pool clubs up and down

[24] Because Kerouac's novels are ostensibly thinly veiled autobiographical fiction, I index his internal reflections in his novels as documentary evidence.

Colfax Avenue to read Marcel Proust and Arthur Schopenhauer. Shortly after meeting him, Ginsberg fell in love with Cassady and the two had an on-again off-again relationship for years. Like Ginsberg, Kerouac was attracted to Cassady's magnetic personality, autodidactic and experiential knowledge, and hearty appetite for the spontaneous lifestyle. Especially when Kerouac found out that Cassady was born around the same time Gerard died, Kerouac knew he found his soul-brother.

Cassady, who grew up helping his wino father panhandle for pennies on Larimer Square, exemplified the fellaheen in a different way than Huncke. Cassady's criminality—typified by stealing cars for joyrides—was antithetical to Huncke's, which "sulked and sneered" (Kerouac, *On* 7). Kerouac saw Cassady as a genuine fellah-type of the American West who embodied his concept of the American dream (McNally 89). As Lawrence Ferlinghetti explains in his prefatory note to Cassady's autobiography *The First Third*, he was "an early prototype of the urban cowboy who a hundred years before might have been an outlaw on the range" (vi). Cassady's cowboy freedom opposed middle-class conventions in a different way than Kerouac and Ginsberg had ever witnessed (McNally 90). As Kerouac memorializes in *On the Road*, for which Cassady's avatar, Dean Moriarty serves as hero, he was a "wild yea-saying overburst of American joy" (7). They nicknamed him the Holy Goof, as there was a childlike nature about his submitting himself entirely to spontaneity that wholly governed his choices, and this zeal for spontaneity generated belief in Kerouac (Clark 81). One of Cassady's essential spontaneous behaviors was his penchant for road trips. Propelled by wild bop, he would drive for extended periods of time that Kerouac previously thought impossible (81). Kerouac, and Ginsberg to a certain degree, viewed these road trips as religious pilgrimages, and road tripping became a central practice of the Beat

counterculture (Clark 81). Cassady epitomized the American fellaheen for middle-class Kerouac, who, like his friend, the "western kinsman of the sun," began working menial jobs to garner enough money for another road trip (Kerouac, *On* 8).

As an embodiment of the fellaheen and the American dream, Cassady functioned as the catalyst for Kerouac's access to the rest of America and the maturation of his writing style. While Denver and then the Bay Area were always touchstones for Cassady, his real home was on the road, which was later made manifest by his position as driver for Ken Kesey's bus, Furthur.[25] Cassady was the stimulus behind Kerouac's own unlocking; because, while he had already been exposed to various forms of spontaneity, his friendship and escapades with Cassady developed his spontaneous prose. During his troubles finding a publisher for *The Town and the City*, Kerouac realized that he needed more experience to stimulate his art. Ever the Herman Melville enthusiast, he viewed his friend as a "mad Ahab" with whom he committed to travel (Clark 87). In a Rimbaudian procedure, Kerouac allowed Cassady to "sweep him into dissipation on principle, into the systematic derangement of reason and the senses that would destroy the old patterns and leave him naked and reborn. Grass, speed, the roadhigh drug itself, the means didn't matter" (McNally 111).

In an effort to "destroy old patterns" and to submit fully to Cassady's force, Kerouac traveled that "crooked road of prophecy," which generated not only the breakthrough *On the Road* and its avant-garde brother, *Visions of Cody*, but also the eleven books that make up his Duluoz Legend (135).[26] While Ginsberg's reputation is more overtly tied to prophecy and

[25] In 1964, Cassady, nicknamed Speed Limit, drove Furthur, the bus that dotted the nation as its Merry Pranksters—which included the Warlocks who were later known as the Grateful Dead—conducted acid tests, introducing American youth to a new reality unlocked by LSD.

[26] In chronological order as per the narrative of Kerouac's life, the Duluoz Legend books include: *Visions of Gerard* (1963), *Doctor Sax* (1959), *Maggie Cassidy* (1959), *Vanity of Duluoz* (1968), *On the Road* (1957), *Visions of*

visionary poetics—partly because he was more of a self-promoter than Kerouac, who was introverted and insecure—Kerouac's own visionary experiences significantly impacted his worldview and informed his writing. As a child, Kerouac witnessed a statue of St. Teresa turn towards him, and he afterwards experienced Catholicized visions throughout his life (McNally 10). For instance, in 1954, during a trip to Lowell for research, he saw a statue of Mary turn to bless him, which caused him to realize the beatific aspect of Beat: "holy compassionate, the ungrasping affection of the downtrodden" (Kerouac qtd. in McNally 190). On another occasion, he had a hunger vision or a "hunger satori"[27]—not unlike that experienced by mystic nuns who would starve themselves until they saw ecstatic visions of Christ. He records this vision in *On the Road*:

> And just for a moment I had reached the point of ecstasy I had always wanted to reach, which was the complete step across chronological time into timeless shadows, and wonderment into the bleakness of the mortal realm, and the sensation of death kicking at my heels to move on[…]in the magic moth swarm of heaven. (142)

In Kerouac's visionary experiences, his Catholic worldview was intertwined with Buddhist rituals and beliefs, the combination of which manifests in a particularly interesting episode in 1950 when his mother Mémère was very ill. Kerouac meditated next to her and "'saw' a Heet liniment bottle, a brandy bottle, and white flowers on her bedside table," which prompted him to take the flowers away and treat her with the liniment and brandy (McNally 215). Mémère was immediately cured; her doctor verified that she had been allergic

Cody (1972), *The Subteranneans* (1958), *Tristessa* (1960), *The Dharma Bums* (1958), *Desolation Angels* (1965), *Lonesome Traveler* (1960), *Big Sur* (1962), and *Satori in Paris* (1966).

[27] Satori literally means "awakening" in Japanese. Zen Buddhists like D.T. Suzuki speak of this awakening in consciousness, or the opening of the Third Eye, in terms of immediacy after a certain amount of time practicing *zazen* (Zen meditation). As Asian Studies Professor Steven Heine explains, Satori is "the Zen goal of attaining the sudden flash of understanding that characterizes an experience of instantaneous awakening or Satori" (6). These aspects of suddenness and instantaneousness are intrinsically tied to the satoric phenomena, because the nature of Satori is spontaneous and beyond the experiencer's control.

to the flowers and that the Heet and brandy helped her, to which Kerouac responded by feeling as though he were a channel to God (McNally 215).

Despite Kerouac's devotion to both Catholicism and Buddhism,[28] like Ginsberg, he too resolved that he could not find the Divine in organized religion. In addition to their intermittent visionary experiences, they found spirituality in their own art, bebop, other spontaneous occasions, and eventually, in Cassady and on the road itself. In addition to creating literature that criticized mainstream society, central to the Beat Generation—and specifically Kerouac and Ginsberg's inception of the New Vision—was their constancy of mystical visions and belief in transcendence (Tokinson 19). They borrowed from Transcendentalism, as they believed all beings to be interconnected, and this vast network could be accessed by the powers of the human mind. They learned from Ralph Waldo Emerson the desire to find the sacred in daily life, from Thoreau the "sainthood of the nonconformist and the awesome sacredness of Nature," and from the Ripleys and Alcotts who designed Brook Farm and Fruitlands respectively, the concept of the kingdom of heaven on Earth (which they borrow from Isaiah) (19). Additionally, they gleaned from Walt Whitman that America is a great poem waiting to be written. In fact, in 1940 a part of the Prometheus group's reading was Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, which irrevocably changed Kerouac; as biographer Dennis McNally remarks,

> The water's babble became the sound of the cosmos to Jack as he pondered the meaning of life, death, rebirth[…]Walt was more than a metaphysician to them; he was an American…a bard who sang for the soul of a great country, who exalted the common working people[…]who howled of righteous freedom. (41)

[28] One of Kerouac's lifelong quests was the reconciliation of two seemingly antithetical religions: Catholicism and Buddhism. *Visions of Gerard* is a novel that displays this attempt at this reconciliation.

From then on, Kerouac too sought to be a creature of the cosmos like Whitman, and he saw his life's mission as "prowl[ing], and roam[ing], and see[ing] the real America that was there and had never been uttered" (Kerouac, *Vanity* 78).

Years of thinking about Whitman's simultaneous praise and pessimistic uncertainty of America in addition to spontaneous yet cerebral bebop, Carr's *actes gratuits,* and the New Vision as inspired by Rimbaud coalesced upon reading Cassady's letters. One letter in particular, which I also discuss in my next chapter about Ginsberg, referred to as the "Joan Anderson Letter" by Beat scholars, epitomizes Cassady's fast-paced, frenetic version of Proust's style. In typical Cassady form, the letter—the "pricky tearjerker"—is a stream-of-consciousness "rollercoaster ride" through his tumultuous relationship with Joan Anderson, who attempted suicide upon his breaking up with her (Cassady qtd. in Ulin). The recently discovered letter, which is now owned by the Beat Museum in San Francisco's North Beach, symbolizes the tremendous impact Cassady had on Kerouac and also Ginsberg, who considered it prophetic, as it characterizes a spontaneous groove, "a continuous chain of undisciplined thought" that uses the details of the narrative account as the form itself (Belgrad 204). Cassady was Kerouac's foremost muse because he wrote just like he lived, without premeditation and deliberation, and instead purely dictated by his faculty of spontaneity.[29] Cassady naturally captured immediacy—"all first person, fast, mad, confessional, completely serious, all detailed"—which is what Kerouac and Ginsberg strived towards in their own writing (Clark 95).

Prior to being animated by Cassady's spontaneity, Kerouac was toying with his own spontaneous method. In *The Town and the City* days, he attempted to write as a neo-Thomas

[29] As Jerry Garcia once said of Cassady, he was "singular…he was the artist and he was the art also," which Garcia claims Cassady was conscious of ("Jerry").

Wolfe, whose expansive prose moved him (Clark 46). Kerouac characterized Wolfe's prose as "rolling style," aspects of which stayed with him in the later part of his career. Wolfe's passages about the "weathers" of America evolved into Kerouac's concept of the "mute unvoiced road," which is centered around the Whitmanesque fact that this country is a poem waiting to be written, and American writers "ought to give tongue to American places" (Kerouac qtd. in Clark 46). Like Ginsberg, Kerouac took inspiration from Fyodor Dostoyevsky's "ecstatic glooms," the fact that suffering comes out of awareness and that the "civilized" society around him seemed absurd and was quite possibly mad (McNally 51).

In 1943 in Liverpool, upon being honorably discharged from the Navy, Kerouac was suddenly illuminated by the reality of his commitment to art, a "lifetime of writing about what I'd seen with my own eyes…a contemporary history record for future times to see what really happened" (Kerouac qtd. in McNally 59). He vowed then to become a divine scribe "capturing on paper the life in front of him, even as the special angel of death perched on his shoulder gave his visionary record a transcendent power" (59). But how? He invented "Self-Ultimacy," an idiosyncratic notion that blended his staunch devotion to the New Vision with a Catholic concept of self-flagellation. The process entailed Kerouac using his own blood to write pieces he would then burn, which he claimed cultivated "serious effort at self-purification, so that art would become a holy duty that transcended all intellectual concepts. Ideally, phoenix-like out of the ashes of his old self would come a new personality capable of an extraordinary perception" (74). Burroughs soon put an end to Self-Ultimacy and coaxed Kerouac away from a Wolfean style; instead, the *Naked Lunch* author encouraged his friend to write in the mode of factualism, his neologism for prose that is not fictive, but instead loyal to "straight-case history" (Clark 94). Kerouac likened Burroughs' factualism to

Melville's "deep form," albeit "fast, mad, confessional," which Melville's was not (Clark 96). Many have since claimed that Kerouac's performance of factualism is New Journalism years before the genre was invented.[30]

However, it was not until October 1951 that Kerouac experienced a breakthrough that would ultimately intertwine factualism with spontaneity.[31] During Lee Konitz's performance at Birdland, Kerouac had an epiphany about spontaneous art that resulted in his legendary reflective line, "Blow As Deep As You Want to Blow" (qtd. in McNally 139).[32] Here, Kerouac means writing just as the saxophonist plays. The epiphanic moment this line encapsulates lies in the crystallization of the parallel nature of Beat writing and bebop saxophone playing. Within days, on October 25th, he shared a meal with White (his Columbia friend from Denver who was partly responsible for introducing him to Cassady), who serendipitously suggested that Kerouac sketch with words much like the architect sketched his own designs. He tried White's sketching technique in subway stations and cafeterias and realized that his physical surroundings prompted "in myriad profusion" mental associations that figured into the sketching (Clark 103). White's sketching advice soon evolved into Kerouac's concept of "Modern Prose indeed" that he likened to Proust's style, but which he soon began to refer to as spontaneous prose, a "rapid notational method for transcribing from memory and imagination" (103). Kerouac later explained to Ginsberg in a letter dated May 8, 1952, that to write spontaneous prose "you just have to purify your

[30] New Journalism is a style of non-fiction writing that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, and is characterized by "intense, immersive reporting delivered to the reader through the subjective prism of the author's own point of view" (Bakke).

[31] *The Town and the City*, which was written in 1945, is evidence that while he was thinking about different styles, such as Burroughs' factualism, he was not yet comfortable exercising them then.

[32] While he wrote this in his journal in October of 1951, the line eventually made it into his "Belied & Technique for Modern Prose."

mind and let it pour the words, and write with 100% personal honesty both psychic and social etc. and slap it all down shameless, willynilly, rapidly" (qtd. in Knight and Knight 142). This approach is perhaps why Kerouac's prose is, as Henry Murray explains, the autobiography of self-image, as opposed to the more typical autobiography of the self (Clark 95). The autobiography of self-image documents the experiencer's perceptions of events and people, which are elevated to literary content, much like in Melville's *Pierre; or, The Ambiguities* (qtd. in Clark 95).

Perhaps due in part to his insecurity, Kerouac's explanations about spontaneous prose lack any mention of its prosodic elements. It is important to highlight the fact that Kerouac's spontaneous prose is infused with musical, lyrical elements that provoke Clark Coolidge's proclamation, "Come on! His whole project was poetry," because regardless of lineation, Kerouac was always highly attuned to prosody (78). In a review for *The Dharma Bums* in 1958, Ginsberg coined the term "spontaneous bop prosody" to characterize his friend's style; he explains,

> Spontaneous Bop Prosody, a nickname one might give to this kind of writing-that is to say, read aloud and notice how the motion of the sentence corresponds to the motion of actual excited talk[…]Bop because, partly, in listening to the new improvisatory freedoms of progressive musicians, one develops an ear for one's own actual sounds.

This phraseology, "spontaneous bop prosody," is essential because it signals to the similarities between Kerouac's compositional method and bebop musicians' woodshedding, in that both are spontaneous practices drawn from the artist's trove of knowledge and craft. Both generate "freedom after total discipline" (McNally 209). Spontaneous bop prosody describes the essential nature of Kerouac's writing that mimics how bebop works, with its network of free associations: "Music is memory. Intervals, chords, relations of now and

then" (Coolidge 85). Spontaneous bop prosody with its "high-pressure fluidity of the line" captures synesthesiacally the relationship between poetry and music (136).

The first section of *Visions of Cody* is one of the best examples of spontaneous bop prosody. For instance, in one fragment, Jack Duluoz (Kerouac's avatar), enters St. Patrick's cathedral in Manhattan at sunset, and the "holy blue window," a stained-glass window he focuses on, through which shines "congealed blue with streaks of hot pink," makes him think of a car window he looked through as it barreled westward on one of his road trips (Kerouac qtd. in Clark, 102; Kerouac, *Visions* 29, 28). Then, spurred on by hearing the priest's novena recitation, he sketches—that is, he woodsheds with words—and honors the implicit free-associative thoughts the process leads him to:[33]

> The novena hushkehush sounds like this: agony in the hands, fakery, fear of moaning, so a general communal drone that takes care of the moan-sound when it rises en masse in these stone arches that were made and shaped to transform the irritable mumbles into long-faced groans – Far off across the sea of seats and the continent of the altar, among the Gothic holes and openings, I see a parade of hand claspers and one flitting wispy ravenclad boy priest who wheels to kneel and coughs politely – There, too I see flickers like the fires of Hannibal's camp across the plains of Rome – This window is now gone dead with the night, woe unto the last halo, it didn't seem possible! – The leading novena voice is like a woman's – can it be? Before me kneeling is a little woman in a black cloth coat and cheap fur collar, with black beret, ordinary hair, praying like the ladies, the unobtrusive unshowing-off ladies of Lowell especially the French ones…
> Many years ago in a church just like this but smaller, holier, more venerated by hearts, I came with hundreds of little death-conscious boys… (29)

Sketching the scene at St. Patrick's and submitting to the free-associative trajectory of his thoughts sends him deep into his psyche, which yields a detailed memory from his altar boy days. Only a loud "Slam!" of a pew box that "sounds like the sad gun of eternity being fired in the name of mortal imperfection" brings him back to the moment (30).

[33] A novena is a Roman Catholic tradition of private or public prayers that are repeated in a series of nine days, during which devotees pray for favors from Christ, Mary, and/or saints (Storey 2-3).

This passage stands alongside many that represent his spontaneous prose praxis, his spontaneous bop prosody, but it also illustrates other aspects of Kerouac's writing. Earlier, I mentioned that Kerouac and Ginsberg both resolved that they could not find the Divine in sites of organized religion, yet, this passage written in St. Patrick's cathedral is exemplary of the fact that Kerouac was continuously drawn to Catholicism due to a deep-seated religious-based guilt that he was imbued with as a child. However, while he physically attends the novena, instead of partaking in any of the traditional ritualistic aspects of the service, he sits in the pews and sketches his surroundings, fully submitting to the process that shifts his focus from the cathedral to ancient Rome to the praying ladies to his childhood as an altar boy. Therefore, this passage highlights that Kerouac was New Vision zealot, as "the transcendental *act* of making art" was a spiritual experience for him, and clearly more meaningful than actually partaking in the novena (McNally 66).

Furthermore, unlike *On the Road*, which publishers required him to edit, *Visions of Cody* was never revised, so the fact that this raw section contains heavy "o" and "oa" assonance delivered spontaneously without revision points to the chant-like Beat characteristic of Kerouac's writing. Such o-based assonance features throughout Kerouac's work, and it harkens to one of his most important visions. In *On the Road*, Sal reports the experience of seeing a prophetlike mystery tramp when he was "on the hot road underneath an arc-lamp with the summer moths smashing into it[…]when he saw me as he passed, he said, '*Go moan for man*'" (Kerouac, *On* 303). He expands upon his vision of what seems like the folkloric Vanishing Hitchhiker in *Visions of Cody*:

> At the juncture of the state line of Colorado, its arid western one, the state line of poor Utah I saw in the clouds huge and massed above the fiery golden desert of eveningfall the great image of God with forefinger pointed straight at me through halos and rolls and gold folds that were like the existence of the gleaming spear in

> His right hand, and sayeth, Go thou across the ground; go moan for man; go moan, go groan, go groan alone go roll your bones, alone; go thou and be little beneath my sight; go through, and be minute and as seed in the pod, but the pod the pit, world a Pod, universe a Pit; go thou, go thou, die hence; and of Cody report you well and truly. (Kerouac, *Visions* 295)

In this version, rather than standing on the road as Sal was, Jack sits in the back-left seat of a car rolling westward from Denver to San Francisco, a key Beat route. He recites a simple poem to himself about the road,[34] and then sees this vision of the Divine who instructs him in bebop prosodic staccato phrasing to "go moan for man; go moan, go groan, go groan alone go roll your bones, alone" (295). That the road poem comes before this prophetic vision is significant, because the road is highly symbolic for the Beats, as well as for countercultural figures such as Bob Dylan and Janis Joplin who were inspired by the Beats. The road not only symbolizes freedom, as being on the road freed Kerouac from Columbia, the City, the "tedious intellectualness" of his friends, Mémère, the cruelty of publishers, and so many more constraints, but it also signifies the expansion of the American spirit throughout this great land (*On* 7).[35]

Kerouac's relationship to the road always makes me think of Whitman's *Democratic Vistas*, in which he criticizes the postbellum materialism and consumerism that defined the Gilded Age and which threatened the essential democratic nature of the country. In the

[34] *O dewy road,*
Filmy eyed dove,
Road of gold, rove
Noun of roads,
The town of roads,
Road, a road,
The same new old,
The near a ling. (Kerouac, *Visions* 295)

[35] It is noteworthy that the nation's interstate highway system was being planned and built as of 1944, which provided ease of access between states and from coast to coast. In his *New Yorker* article about *On the Road*, Louis Menand explains, "The interstates changed the phenomenology of driving."

book, Whitman lauds Manifest Destiny, and suggests as a remedy the cultivation of new art forms "displacing all that exists, or that has been produced anywhere in the past, under opposite influences" (Whitman, *Democratic* 931-932). Decades later, Kerouac seems to take Whitman's advice, as he derived fundamental inspiration from bebop, an inherently American art form, from Cassady, the embodiment of the American dream, and from the road, which connects all corners of the continental United States, to create his American literature. That Kerouac took inspiration from his journeys on the road, in automobiles where he bore witness to the expansive land and even experienced spiritual visions is consequential. As directed by Whitman, he created a new art form unlike anything in the past, as he fused technology and Romanticism—seemingly antithetical—to engage in an electric Romanticism. Kerouac writes spontaneously about a visionary experience that occurred on a road trip in a car, which may seem like an obvious detail, but is of utmost importance. Before the twentieth century, Romantic poets typically expressed concern about aspects of the Industrial Age; for example, William Blake was disturbed about increasing mechanization and Thoreau was distressed about how the railroad would alter our social reality. Conversely, Kerouac utilized technology as a tool to fulfill the New Vision, as a means to simultaneously experience life and create art. Certainly by the late 1940s when Kerouac fled on his road trips, the automobile was widespread throughout America, so the fact that he elevates the ordinary to a site of deep engagement with his self and with the spiritual plane is markedly Romantic. Additionally, what would be a lime tree bower or the peak of Mont Blanc for "acoustic" Romantics is an automobile in backroads' U.S.A. for Kerouac.

In his essay, "Riding In Cars In Poems: Williams, Stevens, Creeley," poet and critic Graham Foust impresses that when automobiles flooded the market after the large-scale production in the early 1900s, it seemed to break up family life, which he argues is reflected in William Carlos Williams poems in 1923 (44). However, over the next couple of decades as the automobile industry evolved and expanded and as the interstate system developed, the average American's relationship with driving was recast. In its assembly of pieces about cars and driving, Foust's essay indicates two significant concepts: 1) as Tony Smith explains, the road itself is not art, but the driving experience is liberating in a way that art cannot achieve: "It seemed that there had been a reality there [on the road] that had not had any expression in art," and 2) the physical design of an American automobile's interior purposefully promotes meditation and decision making, as it "demands peripheral vision" such that it "is not only a means of transportation, but a way of achieving a deeply needed privacy when outside" (Smith qtd. in Foust 46; McLuhan qtd in Foust 47). Both of these points evidence how Kerouac participates in an electric Romanticism: liberated by the road in a way no one had experienced before the democratization of access to automobiles—whose very design fuels meditation—Kerouac writes spontaneously about his subjective and often spiritual experiences. Consequently, Kerouac innovatively rewrote Romanticism in an electric age. Therefore, it is appropriate that he conceptualized his work as part of a lineage that includes Whitman, Melville, and even Wolfe, in his own response to *Democratic Vistas.* Moreover, that he experienced a vision of the Divine—or, as in the condensed *On the Road* version, a Divine prophet—on the road is significant. The spiritual is not limited to Nature, and it is certainly not limited to sites of organized religion. The Divine can indeed appear as a roadside tramp who conveys a reformulation of Whitman's message from *Democratic Vistas* that reverberates

prosodically with bebop: "Go moan for man…go thou, and be minute and as seed in the pod" *Vistas* (Kerouac, *Visions* 295).

As for the o-based assonance, the entire section beginning with "Colorado," continuing with "through halos and rolls and gold folds," and ending with the final "go moan, go groan" section is not only conceptually essential for Kerouac, as it encapsulates the prophetic purposes of his oeuvre, but these passages are also emblematic of spontaneous bop prosody. The o-sounds are reminiscent of bebop's brass wails in particular. In "Salt Peanuts," Gillespie's trumpet mimics the calls of a salty peanut vendor, and similarly, Parker's saxophone in other bebop songs mimics "the breath of speech[…]as if it was speaking in accents of conversation or excited rhapsodic talk" (Ginsberg, *Best* 36). Kerouac, in turn, uses the "variable measure of speech" in his poetics in a manner akin to Gillespie and Parker in jazz (35). The o-based assonance reminds the reader of bebop brass and the moroseness of Kerouac's lived experience, his "gloom dooms" (Coolidge 36). The fact that this section is delivered to the reader without any revision preserves the prophetic nature of the spontaneous prose, and is representative of the fact that Kerouac's raw, spontaneous method is the catalyst to capturing immediacy and reflects his artistic, poetic thoughts with "100% personal honesty both psychic and social etc." (qtd. in Knight and Knight 142).

Conceptually, it is significant to note that there is similarity between Kerouac's spontaneous bop prosody and Black Mountain poet Charles Olson's poetry composition concept "projective verse". Both terms are founded upon what Olson referred to as "proprioceptive immanence," or the idea parallel to body-mind holism "that the body was the unifying locus of transpersonal force that together constituted the self" (Belgrad 201). Olson claims that the "kinetic energy" the poet feels at the moment of projective verse

composition that is transmitted, perhaps by way of stored energy, by the written words to the reader, regardless of where or when they read or listen to it: "the HEAD, by way of the EAR, to the SYLLABLE / the HEART, by way of the BREATH, to the LINE" (Olson 390). Both practices—projective verse and spontaneous prose—elicit a similar effect, which aligns with the result from any art that entails body-mind holism, such as bebop. As Kerouac states in his "Essentials of Spontaneous Prose," the writer should "satisfy [them]self first, then reader cannot fail to receive *telepathic shock and meaning excitement* by same laws operating in his own mind" (my italics; 1). Similar to Olson's projective verse, Kerouac's spontaneous prose and Ginsberg's auto-poesy, (which I discuss in the next chapter) are designed to use written art as a vehicle to channel the artist's emotion to the audience with immediacy. Interestingly, Kerouac once called Olson's projective verse "dreary analysis"—perhaps because MIND lacks in Olson's projective verse—so any more discussion about the comparison is all but moot (qtd. in Belgrad 204). Nonetheless, what remains significant is that different American poets writing in the same era recognized the need for writing with an "unself-conscious process of fitting the body-mind's subjective apprehensions to a communicative medium," which undoubtedly arises from the artists' emotional responses to the turbulent world around them (Belgrad 204).[36] Kerouac's raw, mad, confessional, energetic spontaneous bop prosody contains within it a kinetic energy that encompasses his stored up feelings at the time of composition, which are transmitted to the reader upon reception of his work, because he was writing "from the realm of pure consciousness and sound" (Ginsberg, *Best* 210).

IV.

[36] I would be remiss not to mention that Jackson Pollack was creating visual art imbued with a similar spirit.

The final portion of the divine message in *Visions of Cody* contains its own significance independent of, yet in conversation with the rest of the passage: "go thou, go thou, die hence; and of Cody report well and true" (295). The Divine expresses to Kerouac's literary persona that he must "go thou" and only "die hence" once he has "report[ed] well and true" on Cody. Just as Kerouac memorializes his deceased brother in *Visions of Gerard*, he lionizes Cody Pomeray in *Visions of Cody* and Dean Moriarty in *On the Road*, both of whom are verisimilar versions of their inspiration, Cassady, whom Kerouac called "the brother I lost" (320). However, the general public is more familiar with Dean Moriarty than Cody Pomeray, because, as Louis Menand explains, "Books like 'On the Road' have a different kind of influence as well. They can, whether we think of them as great literature or not, get into the blood. They give content to experience." From devoted rock 'n' roll and punk fans who recognize that their musical heroes paid and continue to pay tribute to the Beats and even to Generation Z-ers who may have only heard of Kerouac's name, but who use their school breaks to travel America and document their subjective experiences on TikTok or other trending social media platforms, *On the Road* has certainly been injected "into the blood" of our culture's collective consciousness. That *On the Road* was and remains an American countercultural icon is inarguable. It was the kind of book that teens somehow procured, read voraciously, and kept in their back pockets for status purposes, because it "get[s] into the blood," and, culturally, it read as a guide to beatnik life.

In fact, *On the Road* propelled *San Francisco Chronicle* columnist Herb Caen to transmute the word "Beat" into "beatnik," a neologism combining Beat and sputnik (Clark 191).[37] While beatniks were indeed inspired by books like *On the Road*, Kerouac viewed them

[37] It is not surprising that in Cold War America, Jewish Caen provided a neologism to Americans whose "-nik," a Russian/Slavic suffix, simultaneously connoted communism and Judaism with the subversive literary coterie.

as caricatures of the Beat movement. Ginsberg was less damning and far more accepting of the cultural offshoot—at least publicly—but Kerouac was right to be so dismissive of the beatniks, because the beatnik was a deprecating invention conceived out of a high- and middlebrow misunderstanding and subsequent condemnation of the Beat counterculture. The culture of spontaneity, as enacted by the Beats, challenged dominant political and intellectual discourses, implicitly in their embrace of spontaneity—which seemed anti-intellectual for the tastemakers who upheld intellectuality—and explicitly in their criticism of corporate-liberal America (Belgrad 225, 227-228). Caen's coinage of "beatnik" led to an onslaught of the mainstream media's exaggerated, cartoonish stereotype of the rich person who appeared poor, smoked marijuana, wore black, and enjoyed jazz, which was often characterized by bongo-playing, such as Maynard Gwalter Krebs' character in *The Many Lives of Dobie Gillis*. This was the conformist, mainstream perception of the nonconformist artist with roots in "the glee of America, the honesty of America" who dedicatedly believed in "wild self-believing individuality" as portrayed in *On the Road* (Kerouac, "Origins").

The fact that square society disparaged *On the Road* rendered the book captivating for the youth who were thrilled by a hero like Dean Moriarty. *On the Road* was written as an experiment of spontaneous prose—125,000 words without paragraphs breaks typed on a continuous reel of paper in a twenty-day period. It was a feat for electric Romanticism, but the novel was then carefully edited to appeal to publishers. The legend of the "fast, mad, confessional" Benzedrine-driven burst of writing usually fails to mention that Kerouac drew from previous writing in his journals from 1947-1950 and then revised the manuscript for six years (Clark 96). Still, even considering these facts, the composition of *On the Road* faithfully abides by Kerouac's "Essentials of Spontaneous Prose," a document that elucidates

his compositional principles, such as the mental state necessary to produce spontaneous prose:

> If possible write 'without consciousness' in semi-trance (as Yeats' later 'trance writing') allowing subconscious to admit in own uninhibited interesting necessary and so 'modern' language what conscious art would censor, and write excitedly, swiftly, with writing-or-typing cramps, in accordance (as from center to periphery) with laws of orgasm, [Wilhelm] Reich's 'beclouding of consciousness.' Come from within, out-to relaxed and said. (Kerouac, "Essentials" 1).

The excited, swift bursts of writing that formed *On the Road* do indeed come from within, as it is set to a bebop cadence that resembles Max Roach's bebop drumming, which was Kerouac's preferred soundtrack at the time (McNally 134). Therefore, its prosody provides the reader "with a feeling of life struggling inside a deathly society, energy burning bright before the laws of entropy" (134). While, for the most part, publishers liked portions of the manuscript, they did not value the raw spontaneous bop prosody enough to publish 1,000 pages' worth. One could see the publishers' collective response as the epitome of the high- and middlebrow misunderstanding of the Beats' embrace and enactment of the culture of spontaneity, but it was also a savvy editorial decision. In *Heaven and Other Poems*, Kerouac complains that his 1,000-page manuscript of *On the Road* was "cut to 400 pages by Harcourt Brace and thereby reduced from a mighty[…]black book of sorrows into a 'saleable' ordinary novel" (39). However, regardless of the redactions and revisions, *On the Road* still relays events and dialogue—"long confessions that reached all the way down to 'the substance of our lives'"—between Kerouac, Cassady, and a slew of others friends, including Ginsberg, Burroughs, Al Hinkle, and Henri Cru (*On* 170). Thankfully, at some point in 1950, Kerouac pivoted from his original, retrospectively cringeworthy first-person narration from the point

of view of Pic,[38] a black boy from the south to the "sincere tone" of an "angel-author," Sal Paradise (qtd. in McNally 129). Sal, who has "nothing to do but read the land," reveres Dean, the "half crazy cowboy conman," who always needed to *move* (Kerouac, "The Great"; Clark 81).

Writing *On the Road* prompted Kerouac to envision himself as the "'Great Walking Saint of *On the Road*,' a pilgrim who would cross an otherwise doomed America to pay for its sins" (qtd. in Clark 92). Such prophetic language comes from the Beats' perspective of themselves as the enlightened ones among mainstream society they viewed as plunging to apocalypse. The wisdom Kerouac gleans from his experience on the road is a result of the synergistic energy within the Beats' countercultural construct that helped blossom their visions and beliefs to counter the oppressive nature of conformist society. By removing himself from his habitualized routines in New York, from mainstream society, he mimics the fellaheen's distance from society. In the automobile that is designed to promote meditation and decision making and on the liberating road, Kerouac is lead to "a palace of wisdom" (Blake, *Marriage* 28). This is why, despite the redactions and revisions, *On the Road* is an icon of the midcentury countercultural spirit that mushroomed into the hippies' social revolution of the 1960s, which, it is important to note, an embittered, drunken Kerouac staunchly rejected from his mother's La-Z-Boy recliner.

A substantial portion of the emblematic novel's redactions were refigured into another project, *Visions of Cody*, which is the more avant-garde, impressionistic or cubist sibling of the landscape painting that is *On the Road* (Tietchen). After toiling with the *On the Road* manuscript, Kerouac resolutely put his energy into working on another book about

[38] In 1971, this version, titled *Pic* was posthumously published. Its title clearly references the picaresque, which is what *On the Road* is.

Cassady, whose Melvillean "deep form" was to provide metaphysical, vertical depth to the horizontal narrative movement of *On the Road* (Clark 97-98). *Visions of Cody* is made up of mosaics of Kerouac's visions of Cassady and honors how each of their "consciousness[es] *really* di[g] everything that happens" (Kerouac qtd. in McNally 136). Like its more popular sibling, *Visions* too is filled "with exuberance and superlatives as a conscious counter argument to Burroughs' Spenglerian skepticism about life" (McNally 132). However, instead of the sometimes-awkward staccato phrasing of *On the Road*, *Visions of Cody* more successfully mimics the goings on in Kerouac's imagination and natural speech patterns, because its spontaneous prose either results from sketching sessions or derives from transcriptions of tape-recorded discussions between Kerouac, Cassady, and others. The writing in *Visions of Cody* is most similar to bebop, partly because it was not revised like its older sibling *On the Road*. Take, for example, its heavy use of em-dashes and internal rhyme to mimic the music it is influenced by: "South Main Street, bums with bloody foreheads — Indians — buddies of Marines in bloodred sports shirts — Indians in hip blue serge suits — Prado's Mambo coming from Over the Top Bar" (Kerouac, *Visions* 114). I agree with McNally, who refers to *Visions of Cody* an entirely unique "American monologue," something "like Bop," which sheds the "nervous" Burroughs-like staccato phrasing of *On the Road* and instead "adopted a natural speech pattern that suited the rhythm of his imagination" (95).

As hinted at by the title, the experimental novel's main concerns are Kerouac's visions of Cassady—the "unspeakable visions of the individual"—or as Ginsberg explains, "naked observations of Neal" as per Kerouac's perception of and experience with Cassady (Kerouac qtd. in McNally 144; Ginsberg, "Visions" 419). While Cassady/Cody is the hero of the novel, its subject is his mental visions, such that the book exists as Kerouac's most

perfect product of the New Vision. Kerouac had reached a point where his writing was a biological act, an "experience of sensorium functioning, a meditation that operated through both the conscious and subconscious levels but was controlled by neither" (McNally 147). Because writing was at this point second nature for Kerouac, the highly experimental nature of *Visions of Cody* signals the fact that Kerouac was concerned with compositional methods; in other words, it is a book is *about* writing. Therefore, the novel is an exemplary product of the New Vision, as it wholly honors "the transcendental *act* of making art more than [the] beauty the product" (66). It makes sense, then, that of all of his works, *Visions of Cody* was the one piece he hoped to be remembered by, because due to his devout allegiance to the New Vision, he "absolutely attained the quintessence [of] my voice" (177; Kerouac qtd. in Clark 106). Considering that religion and mysticism are animating features of Kerouac's work, then this novel, which he considered the highpoint of his artistic career, is the exemplar of spontaneous prose marked by spiritual writing (Tietchen). As Kerouac explains in "Essentials of Spontaneous Prose," "begin not from preconceived idea of what to say about image but from jewel center of interest in subject of image at *moment of* writing and write outwards swimming in sea of language." Biographically speaking, we know that Kerouac was as happy as he ever was during its composition. At the time, he was living in the loft of Cassady's Bay Area home while enmeshed in a temporarily harmonious love triangle with Cassady and his wife, Carolyn. Because "Mind is Shapely, Art is Shapely," the novel took on the shape of Kerouac's mind at the time of composition (Kerouac qtd. in McNally 146).

Recall that *Visions of Cody* is intentionally a vertical deep dive into the same content of the horizontal *On the Road*. As previously mentioned, its first section is made up of some

of his most spontaneous sketches extracted from *On the Road*: scenes of "this modern or rather sadomasochistic modernity" in a diner, in a men's room, of him masturbating, in a cafeteria, traveling on the subway, following Konitz on the street, in St. Patrick's cathedral (detailed above), and the section ends with a lengthy letter from Jack to Cody (Kerouac, *Visions* 24). Kerouac explains,

> What I'm beginning to discover now is something beyond the novel and beyond arbitrary confines of the story…into the realms of revealed picture…wild form, man, wild form…my mind is exploding to say something about every image and every memory…at this time in my life I'm making myself seek to find the wild form, that can grow with my wild heart…because now I know MY HEART DOES GROW. (qtd. in McNally 145)

Here, Kerouac recognizes his own evolution, because as the wildness of his form grows, so does his heart. The second section is responsible for much of the metaphysical, vertical depth of Cassady's alter-ego, "pure-souled Cody," who "bear[s] his original and sepulchral mind" around Denver (*Visions* 59, 49). Even in poolhalls, Cody "begin[s] to discover in his soul[…]the unutterable realization of the great interior joyful knowledge of the world" (49). We learn of his past and how he became interested in wandering like clouds, which is perhaps an allusion to Wordsworth: "the same lost cloud that always called Cody's attention to his immortal destiny when suddenly seen form a window[…]lamby clouds of babyhood and eternity" (52). Kerouac spares no detail, as he tells us about Cody hopping freight trains as a kid led by his wino father, and how as an adult, he mispronounced metaphysics as "metafsicks," which caused him retrospective shame (59). In terms of both prosody and content, this section is similar to portions of *On the Road*. For example:

> The roads that Cody Pomeray knew in the West and that I rode with him later were all those tremendously frightening two-lane bumpy roads with those ditches on both sides, that poor fence, that rangefence next, maybe a sad cut of earth, a hair head of grass on a lump of sand, then endless range leading to mountains that below to other states sometimes – it humps over each way and the feeling is of the car rolling on a

> side angle, inclined to a ditch, a bump in the road will bounce it in – as a consequence of this Western roads are lonelier to ride than any. (Kerouac, *Visions* 71).

One can see how sections from the original scroll were grafted onto this project. As in *On the Road*, excerpts such as this in *Visions of Cody* "begin not from a preconceived idea of what to say about an image but from jewel center of interest in subject of image at *moment of* writing and write outwards swimming in sea of language" ("Essentials" 1). Ginsberg explains in his notes to the novel that this section epitomizes Kerouac's nickname, "The Great Rememberer," as he details the

> American night's empty facade whose lonely solidity Kerouac had noticed in the corner of his eye, and later centered his gaze upon…The plot of these Visions? K.'s mind shuttling back & forth from N.Y. to Denver to San Francisco weaving the elements of tragedy & history & memory & prophecy together, elements of America and person. ("Visions" 407)

The weaving element is far more exaggerated here than in the less cluttered *On the Road*, which we know is neater due to its years of painstaking revisions.

Part two of *Visions* is representative of how the entire novel emerges as an "extended exercise in montage," because it flits from vertical depth about Cody's past to instances of Jack and Cody together to *On the Road*-like passages of travel. Categorized in the latter are sections like the following, which beautifully depict Kerouac's surroundings:

> Then on those mad mysterious gray afternoons when all of a sudden it was as though the Atlantic Ocean had swept its clouds over the town and they had been further torn and tattered on the mountains and were swooping in a raw chill universe from all directions, screeching birds diving to see, occasional splutters of soft rain blowing upon the faces of people who stood at bus stops hugging their coats and packages to their bellies and not seeing their reflections in ruffled puddles at the curb—that kind of day, that'll only know a rosy cloud at sundown when the sun will find its tortured way through masses and battles of fevered darkening matter—raw, dank, the wind going like a gong through your coat and also through your body—the wild wooly clouds hurrying no faster in the heavens above than the steam from the railyards hurrying over the fence and up the street and into the town. (Kerouac, *Visions* 85-86)

He may have abandoned Wolfe's "rolling style," but Kerouac continued to subscribe to Wolfe's lesson, echoing Whitman, that America is a subject in itself (McNally 44). This excerpt is emblematic of the Whitmanesque aspect of *Visions of Cody*, which is infused with "naked passion and hurtling, uninhibited romanticism" (148). If Cassady is the hero of the novel and the subject is visions of Kerouac's mind, then, in the spirit of Romanticism, one of the most significant protagonists is the landscape of America itself, whose majesty overtakes the artist.

The third part is one of the boldest gestures in Kerouac's avant-garde oeuvre. He set up a tape recorder, smoked marijuana, inhaled Benzedrine, and drank wine with Cassady and some others including Carolyn—with whom he was in love—and talked for days, which generated a trove of content. He ultimately transcribed the recordings and published the result as the third section of the novel, entitled "Frisco: The Tape." The method may seem hackneyed now, but for its time, this section is the height of the New Vision, because of its transcriptions of "*first* thoughts of true mind in American speech" (Ginsberg, "Vision" 410). Aside from a few videos floating around YouTube and in documentaries of Cassady, this is the only instance depicting the "half crazy cowboy conman" in actuality as lived art (Clark 81). As Ginsberg succinctly explains, "It's real" ("Visions" 410). If the New Vision demands spontaneous art, and if spontaneous prose is a "rapid notational method for transcribing from memory and imagination," then why not just record and transcribe? (Clark 103). The enactment of pure spontaneous prose is arguably more important than the content of the transcribed discussions, which are sometimes dull. Furthermore, the section exemplifies electric Romanticism, as its existence relies on the utilization of the tape recorder, which allows a synchronous engagement with spontaneity. The tape recorder is the technology that

renders possible our acquisition of "spontaneous Ritual performed once & never repeated, in full consciousness that every yawn & syllable uttered would be eternal," though we are separated by time and space (Ginsberg, "Vision" 411). In his interview with the Library of America, Todd Tietchen, editor of *The Unknown Kerouac*, explains that sections like this one epitomize the fact that in *Visions of Cody* Kerouac was speaking externally and theoretically about experimentation in art and literature. He asserts that as a textual collage, the novel resembles other modernist works, such as literature by William Carlos Williams, art by Jackson Pollock, and bebop by Parker, because "the text is engaged in a comparative exploration of media forms and how they produce meaning differently" (Tietchen). As Ginsberg remarks, Kerouac "didn't think he was Finnegan's wake; but some American Mouther Fucker" ("Visions" 414). "Mouther" here represents Kerouac's experimentation with the tape recorder as a technological tool to faithfully represent the spontaneous.

While there are some interesting moments in the following section, "Imitations of the Tape," I prefer to focus on the next section, "Joan Rawshanks in the Fog," which is one of the greatest pieces of writing Kerouac ever produced, in my opinion. It is a surrealist, hallucinatory piece by the observer of actress Joan Crawford shrouded in fog produced by the crew as they filmed a movie. Jack faithfully reports his observations, albeit psychedelically, and continuously reminds his reader that his surroundings are filtered through his own subjectivity; we are always aware of his subjectivity. Vivid, surreal moments such as the personification of traffic, "So traffic, whitefaced and panicked, stayed suspended on the street," are met with "which I assure you if you've at all trusted my previous observations," "I endeavor to hear," and even an honest, "…but, no, then, actually"

(Kerouac, *Visions* 288). The section is hallucinatory yet raw, beautiful yet honest. According to Ginsberg's notes,

> Rawshanks is panoramic observation of a movie star, director machinery, crowd, geography Bay & Bridge & ocean, under sky for an hour – An hour's flash analysed & detailed with all the sub-characters on balconies snapshotted…The mandala of Hollywood an instant before the bored death of All American imagery. ("Visions" 416)

In other words, these passages exemplify Kerouac's interest in expressive American art forms, represented here by the magic-making in Hollywood.

Part of what makes the section hallucinatory is that like the swirling fog manufactured around Crawford/Rawshanks, the prose loops back to specific phrases, such as the fact that the actress is wearing a mink coat. The first few lines exemplify the hallucinatory swirling of the prose: "Joan Rawshanks stands all alone in the fog. Her name is Joan Rawshanks and she knows it, just as anybody knows his name, and she knows who she is, same way, Joan Rawshanks stands along in the fog and a thousand eyes are fixed on her in all kinds of ways…" (Kerouac, *Visions* 275). While the fog is artificially produced, it functions much like the sublime natural image in Romanticism: "as though we were all on a mountain top saving the brave skiers in the howl of the elements, but also just like the lights and the way the mist blows by them" (276). Amid the swirling fog illustrated by the prose both in content and in form, the physical fog manufactured by Hollywood magic and the fog in Kerouac's own mind, Kerouac describes the scene of American art produced as he writes American art and references other American art, such as that by Nathaniel West and also bebop, as he emphatically exclaims to Rawshanks, as if she were Parker blowing on the stage at Minton's, "Blow, baby, blow!" (281).

As ever, Jack thinks of Cody throughout, so even the observations of Rawshanks' acting eventually inspire thoughts about Cody. Just after the filming scene on Russian Hill, we arrive at the prophetic section where the Divine "with forefinger pointed straight at" him delivers his message to "go moan for man; go moan, go groan, go groan alone go roll your bones, alone" (Kerouac, *Visions* 295). After the final portion of the Divine message directing Kerouac to report on Cody "well and truly," we receive pure visions of Cody, which Jack reports that he has had several (295). One vision in particular, "The one great occasion," begins with Cody and extends to America: "I saw him with eyes of fire or on fire and saw everything not only about him but America, all of America as it has become conceptualized in my brain" (297). Cody's "Yesses and That's Rights and I Do Hear Yous, Man" remind him of America, not only because they are typical American colloquialisms, but because the "Exegesis of Neal" that comprises this novel is an allegory of American art (297; Ginsberg, "Vision" 417). Therefore, Cassady who is governed by spontaneity is symbolic of American art. Why Cassady? Because "Yes he's an angel. I'm his brother, that's all" (Kerouac, *Visions* 298). Before Cassady entered Kerouac's life, the writer was but toying with spontaneous writing, drawing from methods used by his writing heroes; but Cassady's spontaneous approach to life inspired Kerouac to alter his compositional methods. *On the Road* and to a greater extent *Visions of Cody* exemplify how Kerouac "displac[ed] all that exists" and reconfigured what it means to write spontaneously (Whitman, *Democratic* 931-932).

If *On the Road* is essentially a book about the quest for kindness in a world in flux, then *Visions of Cody* is a prophecy: "The sudden return of complete freedom, joy, tenderness, liberation of human light" (Ginsberg, "Vision" 419). Some portions, such as the transcriptions of recorded conversations, connect the reader like a voyeur to Kerouac and

Cassady's secret realities, but the novel in its entirety is spontaneous, surrealist, and hallucinatory, as it provides the reader with "complete explanations of his states of conscious experience" (Ginsberg, "Vision" 420). *Visions* may be the most perfect demonstration of Kerouac's brand of the New Vision, his spontaneous bop prosody: "Time being of the essence in the purity of speech, sketching language is undisturbed flow from the mind of personal secret idea-words, blowing (as per jazz musician) on subject of image" (Kerouac, "Essentials" 1). While *On the Road* is a cultural icon and therefore has proven its success, *Visions of Cody* succeeds what the former attempted, to cultivate the "Christmas on earth," as prophetically directed by Rimbaud, in the face of the "disgusting, enervating, corruptive, and brutalizing" world (Rimbaud, "Morning" 207; Flaubert qtd. in Schwartz 16).

The novel epitomizes Kerouac's brand of the Beat poetics of presence, the spontaneous bop prosody he cultivated to combat the politics and culture of contemporary mainstream society. If "Each poet creates his own language from that which he finds around him," Kerouac does so by using his "all first person, fast, mad, confessional, completely serious, all detailed" writing as a vessel of his emotions communicated to readers displaced temporally and spatially with the use of technological auxiliaries. These he transmits to the reader as the Bird does with his saxophone, Olson with his projective verse, and Ginsberg with his auto-poesy (Ellison 266; Clark 95). Just as bebop and its essential freedom sounds inspired by the various emotions of the human voice, *Visions of Cody* exemplifies how Kerouac's spontaneous bop prosody radically resists incorporation by the mass media, as it rebels against and actively rejects 1940s corporate liberalism. Unlike *On the Road*, which is exemplary of how the counterculture can be consumed and co-opted by corporate-liberal America, *Visions of Cody* typifies the New Vision's call for the creation of literature that draws

from spontaneous experience and experimentation, literature which successfully subverts the mainstream, while drawing inspiration from the American landscape. The novel is a celebration of Cassady, who symbolizes the culture of spontaneity, which is the key to the Beats' countercultural endeavors. Together, these novels function as a prophecy, as directed by Kerouac's vision of the Divine that demanded of him to "go moan for man; go moan, go groan, go groan alone go roll your bones, alone…[and] report well and true" of Cassady (Kerouac, *Visions* 295). Just as Kerouac was spurred into ultimate action by Cassady, so did Kerouac's prophetic Duluoz Legend novels like *On the Road* and *Visions of Cody* galvanize younger generation of Americans.

Where Are We Going, Allen Ginsberg? Which Way Does Your Beard Point Tonight?

I.

It was 1948—the year when the psychological fallout of the 1945 bomb finally hit—and while idly masturbating and gazing out of his Morningside Heights sublet to the Harlem cornices reading poetry by William Blake, Allen Ginsberg experienced an auditory hallucination (Raskin xiv). He saw "heaven in a cornice": "for I'd had a beatific illumination…during which I'd heard Blake's ancient voice and saw the universe unfold in my brain" (Ginsberg qtd. in Mortenson 12; Ginsberg "Notes Written" 229). He heard Blake recite "Ah! Sun-flower," "The Sick Rose," and "The Little Girl Lost," and claims this led him to suddenly understand "the spirit of the universe[…]what I was born to realize[…]it was a sudden awakening into a totally deeper real universe than I'd been existing in" (Ginsberg qtd. in Clark 36-38). Immediately following the visionary experience, he went out his fire escape, tapped on his neighbors' window, and exclaimed, "I've seen God!" (41). With the utmost conviction in his vision of God's omnipresence, of Supreme Reality, he made a vow that he would "never forget, never renege, never deny" the experience, and set himself on the path of a *bodhisattva*,[39] wherein "from now on I'm chosen, blessed, sacred poet" in an effort to save all sentient beings (Ginsberg qtd. in Larrissy 116). Experiencing the auditory

[39] In Mahayana Buddhism, a bodhisattva is a person who can reach Buddhahood, but who compassionately delays achieving Nirvana in order to help suffering beings in our realm of existence.

hallucination instilled in Ginsberg a realization that "[a] poet's consciousness could travel timelessly, alter perception, and speak of universal vision to anyone attaining the same level of consciousness" (Schumacher 95). This concept of a poet's consciousness time traveling shares similarities with Jack Kerouac's spontaneous poetics and Charles Olson's projective verse, both of which I discussed in the previous chapter. However, Ginsberg's version contains prophetic overtones so that his idiosyncratic interpretation of the Beats' New Vision corresponds with Blake's poetic philosophy. For Ginsberg, poetry is a vehicle for visionary statement, poets are a part of timeless eternity, and the poet's central duty is to pass along this heightened consciousness to their audience throughout time and space (96-97).

II.

Nearly four hundred years after Joseph had his own prophetic dream that prompted his fearful brothers to sell him to Ishmaelites who sold him to Midianites who sold him to the Pharaoh's guard, his Israelite descendants made their way out of Egyptian bondage and wandered the desert.[40] Within the Pentateuch's account of this period, there are myriad mentions of the Divine manifesting as a pillar of cloud and leading the Israelites as they wandered the desert. On one of these occasions, the Divine, in pillar-cloud form, stands at the threshold of Moses' desert tent and explains to him and his siblings, "When a prophet of the LORD arises among you, I make Myself known to him in a vision, I speak with him in a dream" (*Tanakh*, Num. 12.6). Peppered throughout the Hebrew Bible are other such instances when the Divine communicates with prophets in their dreamscapes. For example,

[40] The prophetic dream is thus recorded, "There were binding sheaves in the field, when suddenly my sheaf stood up and remained upright; then your sheaves gathered around and bowed low to my sheaf" (*Tanakh*, Gen. 37.7).

the prophet Micaiah's prebattle vision in *I Kings* 22,[41] and, perhaps more famous yet, Daniel's dream vision of the four beasts in *Daniel* 7.[42] Precognitive dreams are a staple motif of prophecy, and even permeate our contemporary moment. Search "prophetic dreams" in your browser of choice and everything from New Age blogs to YouTube tutorials on how you too can see Muhammad in your dreams are listed in pages of Google search results.

Ginsberg is the American twentieth-century poet most likened to a prophet, and because he aligned the stability of his mental health with his journal writing activities, he became a prolific diarist. One of the recurring themes in his journals is his consistent record of his dreams, some of which later made appearances in his poems. For instance, one of his earliest dream poems that he lifts from the pages of his journal is "A Dream Record: June 8, 1955." This poem offers a particularly haunting dream of the recently deceased Joan Vollmer Burroughs;[43] its significance lies in the fact that it functions as the rehearsal for certain surrealistic poetic devices he used shortly thereafter in *Howl*. Ginsberg was interested in dreams because of their insight into unconsciousness: "Dreams open out to other dreams—one vast interconnected dream" (Ginsberg, *Journals: Early* 117). Not only did he use some of his recorded dream content for poems, but as a devout believer in psychoanalytic therapy, he actively reflected on his dreams. For example, Ginsberg believed the central motif of his Room Dreams—a set of recurring dreams in which a disoriented Ginsberg searches for the

[41] "I saw all Israel scattered over the hills like sheep without a shepherd; and the LORD said, 'These have no master; let everyone return to his home in safety'," and "I saw the LORD seated upon His throne, with all the host of heaven standing in attendance to the right and to the left of Him" (I Kings 22.17, 19).
[42] The chapter begins, "In the first year of King Belshazzar of Babylon, Daniel saw a dream and a vision of his mind in bed; afterward he wrote down the dream. Beginning the account, Daniel related the following: 'In my vision at night, I saw the four winds of heaven stirring up the great sea…'" (*Tanakh*, Dan. 7.1-2).

[43] Joan Vollmer was common-law married to the otherwise homosexual William S. Burroughs, who, in a junkie's rendition of the William Tell game, mistakenly and fatally shot her instead of the glass atop her head (a stand-in for the motif's apple).

known in an unknown labyrinthine setting—was a metaphorized exploration of the Bardo, or the postmortem planes of existence as described in *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* (Ball, *Journals: Early* xxvi).

Some of his dreams were indeed prophetic in the precognitive sense. One of the most intriguing examples of which is his entry on October 31, 1959, wherein Ginsberg eerily foresees President John F. Kennedy's assassination, "…all about 1960 presidential races, Kennedy's politicianings & shiftiness—He has a hole in his back. Thru which Death will enter" (*Journals: Early* 111). Second gunman or not,[44] the dream image is uncanny. Likewise, in a lengthy entry from early November 1960 entitled "De Dream of Richard Nixon," he sympathizes with Nixon by way of observing the politician's interaction with his family in his home. In this dream record, he expresses remorse for his previous view of Nixon solely as a dangerous politician, "I'm a little ashamed to realize he is so sincere—and I'm a bunch of liberal-anarchist bums lying around his floor" (161). Ginsberg scholars have pointed out that a couple of lines at the end of the entry imply that the poet's dream bears witness to a post-Watergate Nixon:[45] "—but he has come on polite, very restrained, even under the pressure, sat down & not ordered us out—but an abused prisoner alone in his breakfast nook nervously being self-contained reading papers" (162).

Just after his journalistic recording of "De Dream of Richard Nixon" appears a curious line in between dream records that demonstrates Ginsberg's self-reflection on his dreams: "On the threshold of the Great consciousness" (162). Especially because it is not

[44] Kennedy's assassination is rife with conspiracy theories, including one backed by the House Select Committee on Assassinations in 1979 that suggests Lee Harvey Oswald was not the only gunman who shot at Kennedy that dark day.

[45] Watergate is metonymic for a significant political scandal that began in 1972 and led to Nixon's presidential resignation on August 9, 1974.

expanded upon either in the journal or elsewhere, any conjecture about this line is mere speculation, but I associate with utmost certainty Ginsberg's interest in "Great consciousness" with his fascination teetering on obsession with "Supreme Reality," which is foregrounded in his writing since the 1940s. It is intriguing that this line that exemplifies his metaphysical interests comes after a political dream. Rather than attempt to scientifically understand Ginsberg's prophetic orientation, I shift my attention to the fact that his mysticism is fused with politics. I use these dreams about Kennedy and Nixon as a springboard into a discussion about Ginsberg's prophetic nature, a topic I am not the first to explore, but which I believe is the key to Ginsberg's vital importance in the world of poetry and more broadly in American twentieth century's sociocultural landscape in the sense of counterculture.

Ginsberg's conviction in his position as prophet-poet is essential to the formation of a mid-twentieth century counterculture, for which Ginsberg served as pioneer and promoter. His 1948 visionary experience irrevocably changed his worldview and caused him to subversively repudiate the system of oppression and repression and instead turn his attention to the transcendental plane, which—in the vein of the Romantic theory on spontaneity laid out in my Overture—equipped him with the insight to write prophetic poetry that helped effect sociopolitical awareness and generated in him a deep-seated "willingness to insist on actual liberty and justice for all that led the way" first for the Beat counterculture and then the 1960's social revolution (Goffman and Joy 19). Ginsberg mindfully interweaves his mystical worldview with contemporary politics under the label of prophecy, so it is this particular self-conscious connection that I analyze throughout this chapter. My inquiry is based on his rejection of middle-class America and all of its conventions for a decades-long

search for Supreme Reality, and the evolution of his belief in the power of spontaneous poetics like Kerouac's. I trace Ginsberg's attempts at simply employing Kerouac's practices, which eventually lead him to initiate his own spontaneous poetics in the form of auto-poesy.

Ginsberg's prophetic positioning that entwines spirituality and political commentary exemplifies what Julie Carr and Jeffrey C. Robinson refer to as active Romanticism, because his poetry, journals, hyper-political prose (typically in the form of responses to or letters about current events), interviews, and music "constitute[s] on the level of culture and language [as] a significant response to the conditions of increasing social and environmental degradation" (Carr and Robinson 2). Active Romanticism is the poetic response to social antagonism that endeavors to check democracy (1). "Social antagonism" refers directly to Karl Marx and Theodor W. Adorno's concept of class antagonism at the root of our socially constructed reality that revolves around an economic system. As such, active Romanticism is a poetic endeavor of protest—the "confluence of poetic and social intention"—whose central undertaking demands reconfiguration of societal systems, in an effort to create the path towards true liberation: "We might best characterize it, then, as a force field—at once site and opportunity, a way of thought and constructed response" (12). Carr and Robinson indicate that the French Revolution is the origin of active Romanticism, a movement that is traditionally considered to thrive between 1785 and 1830, but which since "renews itself at any given moment of perceived social crisis" (2). For them, Romanticism thrives beyond 1830 as a dynamic artform that refuses; and active Romanticism is characterized by its radical poetics, which "chafe[s] against a poetry of received truisms," such that it staunchly opposes, as John Keats' writes in his explanation of Negative Capability, "poetry that has a palpable design upon us" (Shelley qtd. in Carr and Robinson 12; Keats qtd. in Carr and Robinson 12).

Poetry as a form of resistance in a capitalist system marked by an "unerring drive to co-opt language and vision for its own use," means that the poetry must constantly react. In Blake's words, "I must Create a System, or be enslaved by another Man's" (*Jerusalem* 1.10.20). Therefore, Emersonian Transcendentalism—which was expanded upon by Henry David Thoreau and Walt Whitman both of whom used their writing to protest against war and inequity—is a re-emergence of active Romanticism in mid-late nineteenth century America. As explained in my Overture, an electric Romanticism manifests with Thoreau and his telegraph wire, which is expanded upon with Ralph Waldo Emerson's language in *Nature* and Whitman's concept of the "body electric." These writers react to their changing world by infusing the vocabulary of electricity into their poetry. Consequently, electric Romanticism could be viewed as a more modern occasion of active Romanticism. For instance, as I showed in the previous chapter on Kerouac, he used cars, Hollywood's magic-making devices, and a tape recorder to achieve his spontaneous bop prosody that is his way of resisting conformist society and transmitting his spirit upon composition to his reader, regardless of their temporal and spatial whereabouts. Throughout this chapter, I show Ginsberg's own spontaneous poetics—made manifest after he attempted Kerouac's spontaneous methods and after Kerouac succumbed to the rancorous life of an alcoholic—furthers the exemplification of an electric Romanticism that is active Romanticism using language and methodology unique to a society with widespread awareness of technology.

Because Ginsberg was consumed by the connection between the transcendental plane and our physical reality, I use Ginsberg's spiritual journey to organize my analysis. By focusing on two significant biographical moments in his life that impacted the expression of his prophetic poetry—his 1948 vision of Blake and "The Change" he endured in 1963—I

track Ginsberg's spiritual journey and explore biographical and poetic content simultaneously. This entails understanding the trajectory of his spontaneous writing, a focus born out of the New Vision (the Beat manifesto) and which he sees as a catalyst to create prophetic poetry. Similar to the perspectives of Friedrich Schiller, Blake, Victor Cousin, and Emerson outlined in my Overture, for Ginsberg, spontaneity is a means for the individual to access transcendence; and because spontaneously-composed art fully captures immediacy, it allows the audience similar spiritual access as that the poet experienced upon composition.

The 1948 vision set Ginsberg on a journey towards apprehending Supreme Reality, which he believed for many years was a journey that could be shortcut with altered states of consciousness stimulated by hallucinogens; therefore, many scholars view him as the psychedelic Blake of the 1960s whose sociopolitical and countercultural endeavors, including his prophetic poetry, are centered around destabilizing the nation's materialistic, Urizenic reality (Davies 12).[46] However, what Ginsberg refers to as "The Change" altered his attempts to pass into altered states of consciousness with psychedelics. From 1963 onwards, he attempted to reach Supreme Reality by performing body-mind holism and fully capturing immediacy, or, in Ram Dass' terms, be here now.[47] To be here now is to be physically and psychologically present in the moment without distractions of past or future, which allows one to access metaphysically a transcendental space. Once Ginsberg realized he did not have to rely on drug use to be here now, his poetics evolved as he incorporated other

[46] In Blake's mythology, Urizen is one of the four Zoas (aspects of a divided primordial man, Albion), who is depicted as a bearded old man who controls humanity with his nets of conventional reason and law. He opposes Los, who represents imagination.

[47] Ram Dass (née Richard Alpert) is an American spiritual teacher who, along with Timothy Leary and Ginsberg himself, features as a leader in the 1960's psychedelic counterculture. Dass' infamous book, *Be Here Now* was published in 1971 by the Lama Foundation as a manual for conscious being that delineates his spiritual journey and is brimming with spiritual and meditational techniques.

spontaneous writing techniques that drew on meditation techniques and the advent of technology. One of the most compelling results of his spiritual journey is *Wichita Vortex Sutra*, which I analyze in the latter part of this chapter, as it is exemplary of a prophetic Ginsberg whose use of spontaneous composition methods without psychedelic drugs performs Dass' concept, be here now.

III.

Long before Ginsberg coined the term "flower power,"[48] which is symbolic of his role as the father of the hippies, he was simultaneously thinking politically and poetically, such that much of his career exemplifies active Romanticism. Ginsberg was raised in an environment that prioritized strong sociopolitical ideologies and that cultivated in him a passion for literature. His was a home brimming with his father's Socialist and mother's Communist sentiments, which often led to explosive political arguments, and where reciting Romantic poetry like that by Keats and Percy Bysshe Shelley was a part of his and his brother's daily chores (Schumacher 7). By the time Ginsberg started at Columbia University, he was interested in becoming a lawyer and pursuing poetry. While he soon shed any ambition for the law, he would eventually use his propensity for working in the legal system to support friends like Timothy Leary in court, produce well-argued letters addressed to high-powered officials like J. Edgar Hoover, and effecting political change at a local level, particularly when he lived in the East Village.

Ironically, Ginsberg experienced his first spiritual growth while living in the Union Theological Seminary in Morningside Heights. It was there that he met and befriended

[48] In 1965, Ginsberg coined this term, which he later explains in his prose piece "Nuts to Plutonium!" from 1978 is a concept that directly opposes nuclear power and other war tactics (25). Flower Power is the symbol of non-violence ideology and a popular slogan throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

Lucien Carr, who soon introduced him to William S. Burroughs and Jack Kerouac, and these friendships mark the genesis of the Beat Generation movement and spurred Ginsberg's own spiritual awakening. Throughout a series of friendly debates between Carr and Ginsberg, the two developed what they termed as the "New Vision," which, particularly with insight from Kerouac, would soon function as the Beat movement's creative manifesto. The essence of the New Vision is the truthful self-expression of one's lived experiences. The roots of such a poetic aspiration reach to Charles Baudelaire and Arthur Rimbaud (Tokinson 90). Carr and Ginsberg were inspired by Baudelaire's exceptionally modern position that an individual's experiences "transformed and transfigured by the creative process" are heightened to the level of art (Babuts 161).[49] Similar to Baudelaire's notion, the New Vision calls for the use of "the humankind materials of art" as typified in James Joyce's stream-of-consciousness technique (Schumacher 51). If the first Baudelairean step towards achieving the New Vision is to heighten subjective experiences to the level of art, then the next Rimbaudian step involves the "derangement" of the senses, because if all the senses are open and aware, one can reach total illumination. And the resulting creative work would not be hindered by strictures of language or any established literary conventions (Ginsberg, *The Best* 29; Torgoff 116).

The Beats firmly believed that truthful self-expression of one's own experiences would lead one to access Supreme Reality (Tokinson 90). As such, their New Vision was inspired foremost by Rimbaud's concept of the poet as seer, which is what happens when

[49] As Nicolae Babuts elucidates in his article "Baudelaire and the Identity of the Self," "Baudelaire proposes a modern conception of art, or literature, whose aim is to create 'une magie suggestive contenant à la fois l'objet et le sujet, le monde extérieur à l'artiste et l'artiste lui-même [an evocative magic containing at the same time the object and the subject, the external world, the world outside the artist and the artist himself]' (*Oeuvres* II: 598)" (164-5).

the poet's senses are completely open, rendering total illumination accessible (Torgoff 116). Rimbaud of course borrows the poet as seer notion from Hebrew Bible prophets who wrote in verse, such as Amos, as well as Friedrich Nietzsche's concept of the poet-philosopher. The New Vision is rooted in Rimbaud's *A Season in Hell* as well as his vision letters to Paul Demeny, one of which, addressed on May 15, 1871, reads,[50]

> I say one must be a *seer*, make oneself a *seer*.
> The Poet makes himself a *seer* by a long, gigantic and rational *derangement* of *all the senses*. All forms of love, suffering, and madness. He searches himself. He exhausts all poisons in himself and keeps only their quintessences. Unspeakable torture where he needs all his faith, all his superhuman strength, where he becomes all men the great patient, the great criminal, the one accursed—and the supreme Scholar!—Because he reaches the *unknown*! Since he cultivated his soul, rich already; more than any man! He reaches the unknown, and when, bewildered, he ends by losing the intelligence of his visions, he has seen them. Let him die as he leaps through unheard of an unnamable things: other horrible workers will come; they will begin from the horizons where the other collapsed! (307)

The "supreme Scholar" who uses "superhuman strength" to fully "cultivat[e] his [*sic*] soul" by "derang[ing]" their senses becomes a particular sort of poet, a poet-seer. Therefore, the essence of the New Vision and Beat poetics is spiritual in nature, because "seer" signals not only to bearing complete witness to the self's physical surroundings as in the Baudelairean, Joycean sense, but the apprehension of that which extends beyond the self's physical awareness: the spiritual. Ginsberg expands upon this extra-physical aspect of the New Vision in the form of an excerpt of an early version of "The Last Voyage" sketched out in an undated journal entry:

> Alas, there is no Mystery,
> But only highest consciousness;
> For our supreme reality

[50] As translator and editor Paul Schmidt explains, *A Season in Hell* "is a set of philosophical meditations, a confessional handbook, a mystical vision of the Soul" (217). It breaks literary conventions, as it is "nervous, compacted" and uses "vernacular uses of poetic language in prose" (217). As Rimbaud himself said of this piece, it is "absolutely modern" (qtd. in Schmidt 217). As such, Carr, Kerouac, and Ginsberg considered it a manifestation of the New Vision both tonally, stylistically, and content-wise.

Resides alone with nothingness…
…
But, oh, my friend, you have no eye
For symbols and you cannot see
Disaster… (Ginsberg qtd. in Schumacher 52)

He considers this his first attempt at writing a New Vision poem, at making use of "the humankind materials of art" (Ginsberg qtd. in Schumacher 51). This poem draft evinces his internal reflection and theorization of the New Vision as he was contemplating other forms of consciousness.

For Ginsberg, Supreme Reality (or total illumination, as I earlier referred to it), the highest form of consciousness, "Resides alone with nothingness," which represents an Eastern perspective of Buddha Nature, or the state of an awakened mind whose attributes are wisdom, bliss, compassion, clarity, and courage (Goldfield qtd. in Mehrotra 47). In his own draft of the New Vision, Ginsberg explains, it is "a reaction against the established moral order that suggested that it was acceptable to step on an ant but not on a human. The ideal was to view the world, as Rimbaud had dictated, "without ordered, rational preconception, and subsequently create a sense of order through the writing itself" (qtd. in Schumacher 51-52). "Without ordered, rational preconception" and instead with "a sense of order through the writing itself," the poet could "Reside alone in nothingness," or apprehend the Divine or total illumination (51-52; Goldfield qtd. in Mehrotra 47).

Shortly after drafting the New Vision with Carr, Ginsberg himself accessed Supreme Reality. The 1948 vision prompted Ginsberg to practice writing unconsciously, which his mentor William Carlos Williams encouraged and which his friend Kerouac strongly recommended (Schumacher 81). The concept of spontaneity Williams and Kerouac practiced in their writing was not new to Ginsberg, who drew parallels between spontaneity,

madness, and prophecy. All of his muses—Naomi (his Mother), Neal Cassady,[51] and Kerouac—were mad, and a central aspect of their madness was behaving spontaneously or behaving according to their truest selves. Ginsberg attributed much of Naomi's eccentric behavior throughout his childhood and adolescence to her propensity for spontaneity. His mother was treated for mental illness for her extreme paranoia, which manifested in her conviction of a governmental conspiracy that she claimed led the doctors to implant listening wires in her back. Later, she suffered lengthy bouts of time at sanitoria and underwent a lobotomy, all of which would psychologically scar Ginsberg. His mother was also "his first model for unconventional behavior and 'wild wisdom'" (Schumacher 88-89). Shortly after her death in 1956, Ginsberg wrote *Kaddish*, a poetic eulogy for his Mother in the mode of and as a replacement for the Jewish mourner's prayer, the Kaddish, which was not recited at her graveside service.[52] The poem honors Naomi's life and reflects on her ability to prophesy in its final line, which begins, "Strange Prophecies anew!" and signals to her impact on Ginsberg (Ginsberg, *Kaddish* 232). However traumatic it was for Ginsberg to grow up with and then care for his mentally ill mother, her spontaneity represented as prophecy helped form his poetics and his worldview.

Once he was living on his own at Columbia, Ginsberg was introduced to Cassady, with whom he almost immediately fell in love. Ginsberg described Cassady as "poetry in motion," the manifestation of the American spirit and celebration of life in Walt Whitman's

[51] Denver-born Neal Cassady is the Beat Generation's muse after Herbert Huncke (a Times Square junkie who used the colloquialism "beat"—as in "beat down" or "man, I'm beat"—which inspired Kerouac's coining the word for the literary movement. Although he mostly partook in heterosexual relationships, Cassady was Ginsberg's first love, which was indeed consummated, as the two shared a love affair. Ginsberg's *The Green Automobile*, a stylistic predecessor to *Howl*, is about an idealistic dream of a road trip with Cassady who would leave behind his girlfriend. Cassady is the model for the anti-hero in Kerouac's *On the Road*, Dean Moriarty.

[52] Because there was not a complete *minyan* (a quorum of ten observant men), certain practices like reading the Mourner's Kaddish, were not permitted according to religious law.

"Song of Myself" (Schumacher 106). Before Cassady crisscrossed the country in a psychedelic-colored bus nicknamed "Furthur" with the other Merry Pranksters in the 1960s,[53] he was Ginsberg's and Kerouac's muse. "Speed Limit," as he was lovingly referred to by Ken Kesey and the other Pranksters was, according to Ginsberg, "the great experiencer & midwest drive and talker, gossiping of[…]eternities" (qtd. in Schumacher 106). Cassady epitomized "lifestyle as literature," which is a simplified phrase that encapsulates the New Vision, and therefore, the central tenet of the Beat Generation (John Clellon Holmes qtd. in Schumacher 106). On December 17, 1950, Cassady addressed a raw, energetic, rambling letter to Kerouac that would spark something integral in Kerouac and Ginsberg, the latter of whom referred to the letter as "a key moment and catalyst" (qtd. in Schumacher 132). The letter is now referred to as the "Joan Anderson Letter" by Beat scholars. Cassady's stream-of-consciousness account of his breakup with Joan Anderson and her ensuing suicide attempt captures the spirit of spontaneous writing that inspired Kerouac's *On the Road* (1957) and subsequent novels like *Visions of Cody* (1972), and provided the impetus behind Ginsberg's attempts at his own spontaneous writing.

However, before Ginsberg truly embraced and performed spontaneous writing, Kerouac had developed his own style he designated as spontaneous prose, or as Ginsberg would later refer to it, spontaneous bop prosody. In a classroom lecture archived in *The Best Minds of My Generation: A Literary History of the Beats*, edited by Bill Morgan, Ginsberg explains that Kerouac's spontaneous bop prosody was inspired by bebop songs like Dizzy Gillespie's

[53] The Merry Pranksters was a brigade of countercultural figures, including Ken Kesey—author of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1962)—and the psychedelic rock band the Warlocks (later referred to as the Grateful Dead), among others. They lived communally in Kesey's California and Oregon homes, but they are best known for their road trips psychedelically painted bus they called Furthur, as they would expose people they met along the way to psychoactive drugs like lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD). Tom Wolfe recorded these events in *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* (1968). For more on this chapter in the segment of literary history I am discussing, please see my epilogue.

"Salt Peanuts," wherein "the saxophone echoed the breath of speech and it was as if it was speaking in accents of conversation of excited rhapsodic talk" (36). Throughout Kerouac's *Duluoz Legend* novels,[54] he develops his prosody, which exemplifies the "excited rhapsodic talk" typified in bebop music like that by Gillespie and others, such as Charlie Parker. *Pull My Daisy*, a short film by Kerouac featuring the early Beats, is another example of Kerouacian spontaneity, as it conveys the quality of improvisation.[55] Part of the methodology of achieving spontaneous bop prosody was to take some sort of amphetamine like Benzedrine and then write in great bursts. After such writing sessions, Kerouac would scantly revise, and only then at the behest of publishers.[56] He was steadfastly dedicated to his spontaneous writing style. While Ginsberg attempted to emulate his friend's approach, he was not entirely able to achieve spontaneity because he was too tied up in his academic background (Schumacher 457). Ginsberg tacked up Kerouac's aphoristic "Essentials of Spontaneous Prose" above his desk as inspiration for a raw technique unencumbered by his habits of revision, which were in direct opposition to Kerouac's insistence, "I want your Lingual Spontaneity or Nothing" (184; Kerouac qtd. in Codrescu 57). It was at that San Francisco desk beneath the shadow of Kerouac's "Essentials of Spontaneous Prose" that Ginsberg would write (and revise) *Howl*, a three-part poem clad with a beatific postscript poem: "A Footnote to Howl".

[54] In the preface to *Big Sur* (1962), Kerouac explains, "My work comprises one vast book like Proust's except that my remembrances are written on the run instead o afterwards in a sick bed…*On the Road*, *The Subterraneans, The Dharma Bums, Doctor Sax, Maggie Cassidy, Tristessa, Desolation Angels. Visions of Cody* and the others including this book *Big Sur* are just chapters in the whole work which I call *The Duluoz Legend*" (iv).

[55] Directed by Robert Frank and Alfred Leslie, narrated by Kerouac, and featuring Beat writers Ginsberg, Peter Orlovsky, Gregory Corso, artists Larry Rivers, Alice Neal, musician David Amram, art dealer Richard Bellamy, and dancer Delphine Seyrig, among others.

[56] For instance, he was required by Viking Press to break up his monolithic *On the Road* into chapters. Viking Press published *On the Road: The Original Scroll* posthumously in 2007.

IV.

After the initial crack of his consciousness in the form of his 1948 vision, Ginsberg sought out other visionary experiences by experimenting with various hallucinogens—plant-based and synthetic—in attempts to move his consciousness so that he could again experience "reverberations of the same vision" (Ginsberg qtd. in Clark 45). Because, as he claimed, hallucinogens provide people with a "disembodied awareness" like that of the soul postmortem, they aid in the "breakthrough from ordinary habitual quotidian consciousness into consciousness that was really seeing all of heaven in a flower" (39). Ginsberg believed that such a vision could supply vital understanding for humans ("Poetry" 3). While he did believe that LSD and other hallucinogens like psilocybin would help cultivate world peace, he realized that it was not a reasonable expectation that *everyone* in 1950s start tripping. So, he applied what he learned from Blake, that "a poet's consciousness could travel timelessly, alter perception, and speak of universal vision to anyone attaining some level of consciousness," and he would use his poetry to shift his audience's consciousness (Schumacher 95). *Howl* does just that—it prophesies.

Like Paul Cézanne's juxtaposition of colors, Ginsberg juxtaposes words with one another in *Howl*, so that the reader's mind fills the gaps "with the sensation of existence" (Ginsberg qtd. in Clark 29). Sometimes, he referred to this technique in Aristotelian language, "dissimilars," and elsewhere, he called the method "jump-cuts." Regardless of the phrasing, he explains,

> What gives the charge or the visionary aspect of poetry is when you present one clear picture and then without any explanation jump to another completely clear picture. The gap or space in between those pictures is a kind of mind space or gap in time or a gap in consciousness or a gap in vision. The mind has to fill in the space between by connecting them. The connections that the mind makes is like an electric charge between two poles. The thought rises naturally in order to connect the two polarized

> images, disparate images, perhaps even opposite images, perhaps even contradictory images. One minute it's somebody talking, the next minute it's a tombstone. (Ginsberg, *The Best* 388-389)

His description that hinges on electric charges is intriguing. Similar to Charles Olson's concept of kinetic energy stored in the poem and translated to the reader, which I discussed in the previous chapter on Kerouac, Ginsberg's jump-cuts intentionally refashion the reader's thinking, which he also explains in terms of physics. Part of the reason *Howl* is such a poignant, moving poem that sparked so many people's imaginations is because of the use of these jump-cuts, such as "hydrogen jukebox," a phrase that connotes the evils and destruction of the hydrogen bomb and the entertainment provided by jukeboxes: "who sank all night in submarine light of Bickford's floated out and sat through the stale beer afternoon in desolate Fugazzi's, listening to the crack of doom on the hydrogen jukebox" (*Howl* 134). "Submarine light" is another example of a jump-cut. "Submarine" and "light" are the two poles, which the reader must connect with a mental electric charge. While many of these dissimilars elicit from spontaneous composition, the fact that Ginsberg refers to them as "intentional surrealism[…]a surrealist or unconscious or imaginative adjective or adverb yoke[d] next to a conscious noun or verb" in a classroom lecture leads me to believe that there is something revised about this particular prophetic-poetic method (*The Best* 396-397).

What lies at the core of *Howl* is Ginsberg's mystical vision, which was inspired and empowered by those on the societal fringes who were deemed as mad by the contemporary postwar Urizenic culture: "I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by *madness*…" (*Howl* 134; emphasis mine). The poem is an emphatic animal howl, much like Whitman's barbaric yawp that "woke the country, shocked it, and reminded it of its dreams, possibilities, and joys" (Raskin 224). Its organization mimics that of Christopher Smart's

Jubilate Agno (Latin for "rejoice in the lamb"). Smart was a self-proclaimed mystic who was deemed so eccentric by societal standards that he spent much of his life in a sanitorium, where he wrote religious poetry. Similarly, Ginsberg claimed that the origins of *Howl* are rooted in his time spent in Greystone Park Psychiatric Hospital, where he met Carl Solomon, to whom the poem is dedicated. However, many scholars who I wholeheartedly agree with posit that Solomon, whose presence at the psychiatric institution helped Ginsberg and who became a genuine friend of his, is used as a stand-in for his mother, who is the real source of inspiration and also the subject of the poem. Naomi is the archetypal figure of mysticism and madness in Ginsberg's life. She is the first person who Ginsberg witnessed with an exceedingly shattered individuality at the hands of society; she is the first person who Ginsberg associates as being "destroyed by madness." And, curiously, Solomon always resisted the poem's dedication to him.

Like *Jubilate Agno*, *Howl* expounds upon the sacrificial lamb who suffers at the hands of society. It is important to note that Ginsberg also borrows stylistically from Smart, who uses the long biblical line and the call and response method typical in Judeo-Christian prayer. *Howl* is separated into three movements: 1) a catalogue of his coterie made up of fellow-visionaries who "counter this Antinomian hazard," the "angel-headed hipsters" who are the sacrificial lambs; 2) a profile of the Antinomian hazard, the nightmarish world the lamb endures, which is governed by materialistic and mechanized Moloch,[57] that destroyer of the best qualities of human nature, and 3) a picture of the individual lamb, Solomon, who is representative because of his confinement at the fictionalized psychiatric hospital, Rockland (Quinn 75; Ginsberg, *Howl* 134; Judge Clayton Horn qtd. in Codrescu 58). Ginsberg himself

[57] Moloch was a Canaanite god who required child sacrifice. In *Howl*, Moloch is akin to Urizen, albeit seemingly more monstrous.

refers to the final "I'm with you in Rockland" section as a "litany of affirmation of the Lamb in glory" (Ginsberg, "Notes" 230).[58] In the poem's poetical postscript, "Footnote to Howl," the poet sermonizes that *everything* in the world is holy—from the typewriter to peyote peace pipes to the asshole. Therefore, by providing examples of the lamblike figures in society, describing the harsh realities of society the lamblike figures experience, imparting an in-depth example of a lamblike figure, and then concluding everything with, as Judge Clayton Horn resolved at the end of the obscenity trial,[59] "ends with a plea for holy living," *Howl* functions as prophetic poetry (qtd. in Codrescu 58). Ginsberg diagnoses society's ills from the perspective of the righteous outliers, and advocates for a more harmonious, peaceful perspective that views everything as holy.

Regarding the connection between prophecy and spontaneous composition, the poem's separate parts were drafted spontaneously, but revised heavily, often in therapy sessions with Dr. Philip Hicks (Raskin 158). Spontaneous composition with heavy revision is similar to Kerouac's process for *On the Road*. Ginsberg's spiritual work celebrates the enlightenment of mystical experience which society needs in order to survive and evolve. One of Ginsberg's triumphs in *Howl*, part of which provides its literary merit is its experimentation with language, the combination of

> the lexicon of holy men, mixed obscenities with sacred oaths, linked the slang of the day with rhetorical flourishes of the founding fathers of the Republic[…]the language of immigrants, natives, New Yorkers, hipsters, transcendentalists[…language] borrowed from Latin[…]the language of dead poets, but also the language of the living street. (225)

[58] Regarding the theory that the poem's central subject is Naomi rather than Solomon, "Rockland" sounds similar to "Pilgrim" as in Pilgrim State Hospital, where Naomi Ginsberg was detained for much time and ultimately died in.

[59] Because of its overt allusions to illicit drugs and sexual acts, *Howl and Other Poems* seized in 1957. Lawrence Ferlinghetti (owner and publisher) and Shig Murau (bookstore manager) were arrested and tried. Ultimately, with the help of the American Civil Liberties Union, the law sided with *Howl*, and the scandalous news of the obscenity trial helped popularize the book even more.

Jonah Raskin refers to the poem's language as a "tragic custard-pie comedy of wild phrasing" (137). Such an experimentation with language is the product of a mystical consciousness that "superimpose[es] visionary consciousness into everyday life" (Schumacher 117). According to Ginsberg, the wild phrasing is a key characteristic of his spontaneous composition at that point in his career. Take, for example, the following lines towards the end of the first section:

> who dreamt and made incarnate gaps in Time & Space through images juxtaposed, and trapped the archangel of the soul between 2 visual images and joined the elemental verbs and set the noun and dash of consciousness together jumping with sensation of Pater Omnipotens Aeterna Deus
> to recreate the syntax and measure of poor human prose and stand before you speechless and intelligent and shaking with shame, rejected yet confessing out to the soul to conform to the rhythm of thought in his naked and endless head,
> the madman bum and the angel beat in Time, unknown, yet putting down here what might be left to say in time come after death,
> and rose reincarnate in the ghostly clothes of jazz in the goldhorn shadow of the band and blew the suffering of America's naked mind for love into an eli eli lamma lamma sabachtani saxophone cry that shivered the cities down to the last radio. (Ginsberg, *Howl* 138-139)

That "custard-pie of wild phrasing" Raskin mentions is evident here as Ginsberg heightens street language like "madman bum" and "beat" to the Latin for "All-Powerful Father the Eternal God," thus beatifying low culture. The jump-cut that portrays Jesus' last words uttered as he died on the cross as a saxophone cry like those echoing in the alley behind Minton's Playhouse is particularly powerful.[60] The fact that all of this is interlaced prosodically with sounds and tones that mimic spoken conversation and the long breath chant used in Jewish prayer exemplifies the sort of spontaneous composition Ginsberg was

[60] Minton's Playhouse is a Harlem jazz spot that is considered the birthplace of bebop.

engaging with at the time.[61] Therefore, regardless of the revision techniques used to create *Howl*, its initial spontaneous composition is of the utmost importance, as it is the spontaneous elements that creates the overwhelming effect of the poem on its reader. Further, that Ginsberg's first lengthy venture in spontaneous composition is prophetically charged is essential.

After writing *Howl*, Ginsberg became increasingly interested in the connection between spontaneity and prophetic poetry. As an expatriate in Paris, Ginsberg and America-bound Kerouac wrote each other letters about spontaneous writing, the publicity of *Howl*, Kerouac's draft of *The Subteranneans*, and Ginsberg's intention to write a prophetic poem reminiscent of Blake and Whitman. In a letter addressed to Kerouac on January 4, 1958, he writes,

> No more poesy for poesy's sake[…]I write so little painfully and revise and I can't get settled down to free expression and have nightmares about ever holding my piece. It's not that I don't really agree with you about the method of writing—I don't have your football energy for scrawling endlessly on pages—I am nervous and fretful and have to force myself to sit down—at least lately—[…]I guess all this publicity is bad[…]I'd like to write a monstrous and golden political or historical poem about the Fall of America[…]If poetry can be made of ashcans why not newspaper headlines and politics? Talk about Dulles the way Blake talks about the kinds of France shuddering icy chill runs down the arms to their sweating scepters. (Ginsberg qtd. in Schumacher 275-276)

While Ginsberg was in a post-*Howl* writing rut and frustrated that he could not achieve true spontaneity like Kerouac, he nonetheless did produce some poems such as "Death to Van Gogh's Ear!" which begins, "Poet is Priest" (1). This line, in addition to the sentiments encapsulated by the letter excerpt above, demonstrates Ginsberg's awareness and admiration

[61] In 1982, Ginsberg said of the method of spontaneous composition in *Howl*, "With 'Howl' it was from voice, to spoken conversation voice, to chant, or to long breath chant, tending to the bardic-chanting direction, the ecstatic direction, and then from chanting actually moves to song with Dylan in the next generation…" (qtd. in Tokinson 125).

of concepts I expound upon in my Overture about the role of the prophet-poet. Spontaneously derived poetry is central to Romanticism in the vein of William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, which then becomes important to Transcendentalists in the mid-1800s. We know Ginsberg was well-versed in Romanticism and Transcendentalism; not only does he reflect on their work in his journals during his time at Columbia and beyond, but he also alludes to Romantic and Transcendental concepts in his poetry. For instance, in a prose piece he wrote entitled "What Way I Write," which was published in *Writer's Digest* in 1960, he explains, "The [Blake vision] experience led me to know art as a time-machine to carry the secret revelation and transmit it unbroken from mind to mind[…]the lines may be said to bear equal weight in that each is a unitary particle of energy in spontaneous composition" (Ginsberg 255-256). The concept of poetry as a time machine is Ginsberg's own version of Blake's poetic philosophy.

Blake himself experienced something akin to Ginsberg's 1948 vision. One day in 1803, while gardening in the yard of his country home in Felpham (the seaside village in West Sussex he and Catherine lived in for some time), Blake maintained that the spirit of the poet John Milton entered through his left foot, after which they were joined in inspiration (Larrissy 115). This was not the first time Blake saw visions of immaterial beings, so instead of being startled, he was inspired. In *Milton*, the poet's most autobiographical work that was based on his life in Felpham, the speaker's voice shifts from omniscient to first person as soon as Blake mentions his left foot (Apesos 393). Similar to Blake with the spirit of Milton, Ginsberg's poetry changed after 1948, as Ginsberg was charged with a newly discovered "obligation [to] annihilate my ordinary consciousness and expand my mystic consciousness through death" (Ginsberg, *Best* 117). I posit that we think of this statement in terms of

Victor Cousin's concept of spontaneous reason—the objective, "primitive" mental faculty, "the operation of the mind that precedes all others"—which is anterior to reflection consciousness (Cousin 55, 48). Substitute "reflective reason" for "ordinary consciousness" and "spontaneous reason" for "mystic consciousness," and the sentence generates similar meaning. The Blake vision kindled Ginsberg's identity as prophet poet, as it inspired in him the impulse to exist as the poetic mediator between humanity and the Divine.

For those fifteen years following the 1948 vision, he used psychedelic drugs as a shortcut to Supreme Reality, or, in Cousin's terms, a shortcut to move past reflective reason to the spontaneous sphere of reason. Achieving genuine spontaneity even with psychedelic shortcuts was difficult for him, as he was used to the academic mode of revising. By Ginsberg's own account, even with hallucinogenic aids, he succeeded with purely spontaneous poetry only a handful of times in those fifteen years. For instance, "Sunflower Sutra" (*Howl and Other Poems,* 1956) was written in twenty minutes before attending a party with Kerouac, and "Kral Majales" (*Planet News*, 1968) was written in a swift burst of energy incited by his anger at realizing the Czech police had absconded with his journals filled with poetry written throughout his Europe trip (Schumacher 219-220, 442). In both cases, the prophet-poet binds the reader to his feelings at the time of composition, which is precisely what Ginsberg learned from Blake in his visionary experience; it is the concept of "art as a time-machine," where the lines themselves are "particle[s] of energy" (Ginsberg, "What" 255, 256).

Throughout the fifteen years from the Blake experience to "The Change," Ginsberg re-conceptualized Kerouac's concept of spontaneous poetics, taking it one step further by overtly designating spontaneity as the key to prophetic poetry. And while I believe a

prophetic, oratorical voice is woven throughout Ginsberg's oeuvre, I agree with him that the strongest expression thereof exists in his most spontaneous poems. Save for "Sunflower Sutra" and "Kral Majales," Ginsberg used a variety of different psychedelic drugs to achieve spontaneous writing. One of my favorite examples is "Wales Visitation," which he drafted on July 29, 1967 as he explored the Welsh countryside under the influence of LSD and then revisited on August 3, 1967 in London. It is important to highlight these two dates, because while the poem does indeed capture a spontaneous composition method and is characterized by the speaker's prophetic tone, it is a revised poem. "Wales Visitation" reads like a British Romantic poem where the speaker muses on the natural sublime, which he discovers he is inherently bound to, as he eventually exclaims, "Road of the mountain wind slow, sigh of the body / One Being on the mountainside stirring gently" (Ginsberg, "Wales" 39-40). Recall Coleridge's concept of One Life—the interconnectedness between humans and Nature—in my explication of "The Eolian Harp" in the Overture.

However, at first, in the initial stanzas of "Wales Visitation," Ginsberg views himself apart from Nature. Its opening lines read:

> White fog lifting & falling on mountain-brow
> Trees moving in rivers of wind
> The clouds arise
> as on a wave, gigantic eddy lifting mist
> above teeming ferns exquisitely swayed
> along a green crag
> glimpsed thru mullioned glass in valley ruins— (1-7)

He observes the sublimity of his natural surroundings he is separate from. Then, in the next stanza, he refers to himself, "Bardic, O Self"; but by the end of the second stanza, the "bloomlets angelic as lightbulbs" signal the fusion of the human and natural world (8, 16). He undoubtedly references Blake here, as he mentions "satanic thistle that raises its horned

symmetry," which harmoniously "flower[s] above" the "bloomlets angelic as lightbulbs" (Ginsberg, "Wales" 14, 15, 16). Recall from my Overture that Blake uses the thistle to explain double vision. Further, the satanic and the angelic exist in unison, which alludes to Blake's depolarized vision of good and evil he expounds upon in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. At the end of the third stanza where Ginsberg shows awareness of Blake and Wordsworth, he announces himself not only yoked to Nature but also to the Romantic lineage of poets. After naming them, he exclaims, "Bard Nameless as the Vast, babble to Vastness!" as if invoking their names solidifies the synthesis of self and Nature, the result of double vision: "Valleys breathe, heaven and earth move together" (23, 48). The act of, for instance, "lay[ing] down mixing my beard with the wet hair of the mountainside" begets the awareness of "One being so balanced, so vast, that its softest breath / moves every floweret in the stillness of the valley floor" (66, 69-70).

One might argue that such a vision would not have been rendered possible without LSD, which is a fair argument and likely one Ginsberg would have agreed with even after "The Change." Ginsberg himself referred to the poem as "interesting evidence" of an experiment during an interview in 1968 with William F. Buckley, Jr. ("Allen"). While the poem underwent some revision, similar to *Howl*, the speaker boasts a prophetic and almost oratorical voice that is undoubtedly human, but also mystical and therefore somehow beyond human. This is because the speaker accesses what Cousin referred to as spontaneous reason, or what Emerson referred to as the transparent eyeball. Ginsberg uses spontaneity, his transparent eyeball, in order to exist as a part of what Coleridge termed One Life, albeit shortcut with LSD. Nonetheless, as biographer Michael Schumacher explains, the poem "uses place as the conduit between different types of consciousness," human and spiritual

(170). In other words, the psychedelic poem's significance lies in its central theme of oneness: oneness with Nature, which he feels intrinsically connected to; oneness with poets like Blake and Wordsworth, who also wrote about the same rolling countryside, the same white fog, the same dew; and oneness with the metaphysical plane, the Supreme Reality, he accesses by way of LSD: "A solid mass of Heaven, mist-infused, ebbs thru the vale" (Ginsberg, "Wales" 34). "Wales Visitation" is therefore a prime example of Blake's concept of double vision. Oneness with Nature, humanity, and the Divine renders possible the notion of "Poet is priest," which I read as similar to Rimbaud's notion of poet as seer, or, simply put, prophet poet ("Death" 1).

Ginsberg uses LSD to see "each flower Buddha-eye, repeating the story"; he sees by way of the Blakean prophetic manner of double vision, and then transmits his feelings upon seeing to the reader because the poem is a time machine imparting the particles of energy upon composition ("Wales" 60). While hallucinogenic drugs reveal "otherwise-hidden regions of the mind and will," in reading back and revising poems written under the influence, Ginsberg realized it was too difficult to dynamically interpret his psychedelic visions poetically (Schumacher 311). The method he achieved for "Wales Visitation" did not work for poems such as "Lysergic Acid" and "Laughing Gas" (316). However, much like the Moloch section of *Howl*, which was written under the influence of peyote, "Wales Visitation" is a powerful poem marked by its prophetic voice. However, because these poems were written under the influence of psychedelics, they required heavy revision and therefore do not capture the spontaneity Ginsberg equated with *true* prophecy. *Howl* and lesser-known poems like "Wales Visitation" are depictions of his attempts at prophetic poetry marked by spontaneity, of his attempts at following that bodhisattvic path, which he would not reach

until he partook in a truly spontaneous method that would constitute the ultimate expression of the New Vision.

V.

To be a prophet-poet in the Blakean sense is to inhabit a liminal space wherein one has access to the Divine and thereby provides humanity with divinely inspired wisdom, or as Ginsberg told Buckley, "the wisdom of earthly relations" ("Allen"). For both Blake and Ginsberg, the position of prophet-poet is a fusion of spirituality and hyper sociopolitical awareness. Grafting Edward Larrissy's characterization of Blake's prophetic nature onto Ginsberg, his actions as prophet-poet "undermin[e] society from within," because on his bodhisattvic path he attempted to erode "the forces of repression, bourgeois morality and the capitalist system" (9). The Blakean, Rimbaudian poet-seer's identity is inherently situated outside our socially constructed reality, because a key characteristic is rejection of mainstream society, which allows them to poignantly comment on it. Empowered by his Blake vision, Ginsberg achieved the New Vision by fully transmitting his phenomenological experience to his poetry. As such, after 1948, Ginsberg's poetic voice was imbued with that of Blake; or, as he told an interviewer in 1956, "Blake's voice is the voice I have now" (qtd. in Larrissy 115). From 1948 onward, Ginsberg became the mental traveler, and his poetry is inflected with the message in Blake's epigram, "The eye altering alters all" (Blake, "The Mental" 62). Ginsberg had accessed Supreme Reality, he had a "taste of larger consciousness"—he wanted more. For the for the fifteen years following the 1948 vision, he experimented with psychedelic drugs, which he viewed as catalysts to access Supreme Reality (Ginsberg, *Best* 26, 30).

Some hallucinogenic visions were fruitful and instructed him with beautiful, Blake-like imagery as in "Wales Visitation" as well as other poems he deemed successfully spontaneous. Sometimes the drug-induced visions even inspired in him positive realizations, such as his desire to procreate (Ginsberg qtd. in Schumacher 333). However, other experiments spawned nightmarish "Vision[s] of Death," such as that he experienced under the influence of ayahuasca (qtd. in Clark 46). But in Jerusalem in 1961, Ginsberg met with Israeli philosopher Martin Buber who had also dabbled in hallucinogenic visionary experiences, and who predicted that in a couple of years Ginsberg would shift away from yearning for experiences with Blakean angels to divine experiences sited in human-to-human interactions (Clark 48). This is precisely what occurred. In 1963, while on a train from Kyoto to Tokyo, Ginsberg reflected on what Swami Shivananda had recently told him, "Your own heart is your guru," and what other gurus advised, such as, "Live in the body: this is the form that you're born for" (48; Ginsberg, *Spontaneous* 48). As a result of this train-ride reflection, he wrote a poem titled "The Change: *Kyoto–Tokyo Express*," wherein he "Open[s] the portals to what Is" (I.15). By opening these portals, the poet shifts from obsession on mind or imagination to getting *in* the body. He was always a poet of the body, like one of his prophetic-poetic mentors, Whitman, but now he would focus on the body as a vessel to achieve altered consciousness, rather than using drugs to shortcut the process. In an interview with Thomas Clark for *The Paris Review* in 1966, Ginsberg explains that "The Change" circles back to Blake, as Blake insisted on the divinity of the human form (49). "The Change," both as poem and event—as per the New Vision—marks a pivotal juncture in Ginsberg's transformation into prophet-poet who had more access to spontaneous reason

than ever before, by shifting away from the reliance on consciousness-altering psychedelics toward a true poetics of presence.

This attempt to fully "capture immediacy," as Erik Mortenson refers to spontaneous composition in his book *Capturing the Beat Moment: Cultural Politics and the Poetics of Presence*, is not a new concept. In fact, this is what Ginsberg admired in Cassady's "Joan Anderson Letter" and Kerouac's writing. As previously mentioned, Ginsberg had succeeded in writing spontaneously without hallucinogens in the past, as in poems like "Sunflower Sutra" and "Kral Majales." But in 1963, he realized that while the body of his work captured the spirit of spontaneity, he was not entirely able to achieve genuine spontaneity because he was too tied up in an intellectual approach (Schumacher 457). In other words, his ego did not allow him to engage in body-mind synchrony—to be fully present in the now—when he was not under the influence of drugs. In December of that year, Bob Dylan fortuitously gifted Ginsberg $600, which he used towards buying an Uher tape recorder (457). The choice was purposeful, as he recognized the potential value in a poetics aided by technology. He was likely inspired by Kerouac's *Visions of Cody*. However, additionally, in 1966, a pivotal year for his spontaneous writing, he wrote a piece entitled "Some Metamorphoses of Personal Prosody," in which he acknowledges a shift in his poetics as a result of listening to Dylan, Donovan, and the Rolling Stones, all of whom used their "own space-age media and electric machinery tunes" to produce music marked by spontaneity (259). In this short piece, he further elucidates the salient connection between spontaneity and prophecy: "Principle of composition here is, however, unlike antique literary form, primarily spontaneous and improvised…, and prophetic in character in that tune and language are invoked shamanistically on the spot from the unconscious" (259). It is possible that he was referring

to Sigmund Freud's concept of the unconscious as opposed to the conscious mind, but while I believe that a psychoanalytic reading of Ginsberg is worth embarking on, such a path is tangential to this discussion on Ginsberg's prophetic poetry and spontaneity. Therefore, I link Ginsberg's use of the word with Cousin's concept of spontaneous reason, which, by definition, resides in the unconscious part of the mind, anterior to our reflective reason that provides us with idiosyncratic subjectivity. It is unimportant whether or not he ever read Cousin, because we know that he was versed in Romantic theory and psychoanalysis, so his use of "unconscious" melds the two and therefore is similar enough to Cousin's concept. Ginsberg's interpretation of the "unconscious" is the mental faculty where spontaneous composition that is "prophetic in character" originates, which is his own version of spontaneous reason.

During this time in which he was thinking about the spontaneous compositional methods musical artists such as Dylan created their prophetic music with, in his *Paris Review* interview, he explained that only rarely did he think he achieved a sense of command in his poetry, as in the "sense of being self-prophetic master of the universe" (Ginsberg qtd. in Clark 55). He revealed that in his past he was too fixated on his Blakean vision to be entirely present, and that he desired to write an epic "narrative and description[…]Epic—there has to be totally different organization [than in *Howl* and *Kaddish*], it might be simple free association on political themes[…]*dis*-sociated thought stream which includes politics and history" (51). Elsewhere, he remarked that whereas *Howl* is a prosodic experimentation—"from voice, to spoken conversation voice, to chant, or to long breath chant, tending to the bardic-chanting direction, the ecstatic direction[…]"—he characterized poetry written after

"The Change" as manuscripts of poetic and improvised tape recordings which were therefore truly spontaneous (Ginsberg qtd. in Tonkinson 125).

Kerouac had his spontaneous bop prosody, made manifest in his *Duluoz Legend* novels, and now Ginsberg had his own unique style of spontaneous composition: "auto poesy" (Schumacher 459). This may sound like a nickname for the surrealists' automatic writing, but it is in fact entirely individual to Ginsberg, as "auto" simultaneously signifies automatic and automobile. He derived this technique from recording methods like those used by musicians mentioned above. Likewise, he also employed the central notion that

> poetry generally is like a rhythmic articulation of feeling. The feeling is like an impulse that rises within—just like sexual impulses, say[…]Which, if you put words to it by looking around and seeing and trying to describe what makes you sigh—and sigh in words—you simply articulate what you're feeling. (Ginsberg qtd. in Clark 23)

By shifting the spotlight solely from the intangible consciousness and instead toward the physical in the present by way of articulating impulses, for the first time in his career, Ginsberg was producing poetry *wholly* representative of the New Vision, not unlike Kerouac's *Visions of Cody*. This "poetics of presence," as Mortenson classifies it, is a spontaneous response "to the material condition of each passing moment" grounded in "a conception of language derived from the corporeal" rather than merely from the mental (Mortenson 1, 7). More than spoken language or even revised poems, Mortenson's concept of "poetics of presence" refers to the artistic account of body-mind synchrony. This sort of spontaneous approach to poetry *truly* captures immediacy, and Mortenson claims that it is therefore a Foucauldian undertaking, as the artist's discourse is embedded with power relations (7). Similar to how bebop musicians rejected European harmony and melody as well as rehearsed performances as a form of resistance, so too did the Beats' poetics of presence rebel against contrived literary modes that were contemporarily in vogue and,

therefore, a reflection of mainstream society (Jones 25). Because spontaneous poetry captures immediacy, rather than displaying any quality of retrospection, it not only exists as an account of its present moment, but simultaneously resists against spatial and temporal repression marked by the "square" paradigm. Spontaneous poetry is a radical artform born from countercultural spirit, as it resists the status quo and shifts power relations. Similar to how bebop music is generated by body-mind holism that intersubjectively relates between the different band members, spontaneously composed poetry captures immediacy and therefore places a radically different kind of authority on language (Mortenson 7).

Like bebop, spontaneous poetry is an act of resistance that redefines "space-time as a fluid, persona conception" (11). Folding Cousin into this discussion, artifacts classified as exemplifiers of the poetics of presence entail the artist reaching into her faculty of spontaneous reason to create and then funnel those creations through her reflection reason, which causes for an aggregation of the personal lived moment into a larger entity. The art generates from experiences of transcendence, so the poetry is unstuck from time, as it reports spontaneously on the temporal and spatial from the atemporal moment, that liminal space I mentioned earlier. Think of Ginsberg's Blake vision, during which the occasion of his afternoon masturbation caused pure body-mind synchrony, whereupon the quotidian and the exalted melded into the same moment of visionary experience. The reproduction of this sort of engagement with the transcendental poetically *without* psychedelic aids requires total body-mind synchrony, such that completely engaging with the spontaneous moment allows for the artist to travel passed her reflective reason (seat of individuality) to her spontaneous reason (objective, collective consciousness). Therefore, the result is a radical use of language

which stems from that universal consciousness conveyed by the artist's idiosyncratic subjectivity, not unlike verse by biblical prophets.

Auto-poesy is a method Ginsberg designed after "The Change" as a means to become more compassionate to the way "the Mind rides" (Ginsberg, "Meditation and" 152). Ginsberg's auto-poesy is the "intersection between the mind of meditation—the discipline of meditation, letting go of thought—and the Yankee practice of poetry[…]where the poet is standing there, feeling the weight of his body in his shoes, aware of the air passing in and out of his nose" ("Meditation on" 268). As such, like Kerouac's spontaneous bop prosody, auto-poesy is the artist's idiosyncratic approach to spontaneous composition, characterized by resistance not only in content but also in the method of creation. Furthermore, just as the key characteristic of auto-poesy is Ginsberg's perspective on the parallel nature of poetry and meditation, its method of implementation is technology in the form of the Uher tape recorder and sometimes, as for *Wichita Vortex Sutra*, an automobile. Auto-poesy exemplifies electric Romanticism, as it explores individual consciousness by means of a modern modality, as it uses twentieth-century technology to create poetry "prophetic in character[…]invoked shamanistically on the spot from the unconscious" (Ginsberg, "Some" 259). Ginsberg's original method of spontaneous poetics binds the human-made technological (Uher tape recorder) to the metaphysical (meditational practices). Further, his poetics of presence is marked by its resistance to the mainstream and its prophetic intensity, as it derives from engagement with spontaneous reason rendered possible by body-mind synchrony. Just as for Ram Dass, for Ginsberg, being here now begets transcendence—temporality begets atemporality.

VI.

Central to meditation is the cultivation of tolerance towards one's impulses, and by 1966, Ginsberg was ready to be tolerant towards his own thoughts. What swirled in his mind upon driving from poetry reading to poetry reading along the Midwestern highways in a Volkswagen camper were visions of the unrelenting bombings in Vietnam and the language of war used by the talking heads on Kansas radio stations. Obsessed with the notion that language is magic, he noticed how the Midwestern media wielded its black magic. For example, distorted truths turned into headlines such as "Vietnam War Brings Prosperity" and "Rusk Says Toughness Essential for Peace" (Schumacher 461). Ginsberg was all-too familiar with the power of language from his knowledge about mantras, which he defines to poet-critic Paul Carroll as "a short magic formula usually invoking an aspect of the Divine, usually given as meditation exercise by guru to student…the formula is considered to be identical with the god named, and have inevitable power attached to its pronunciation" (Ginsberg qtd. in Carroll 293). The idea is that as one chants mantras and articulates the names of the gods, they become real. This language-to-reality magic of the mantra explains while it also represents the antithesis of the black magic used by the American media warping the truth as they reported on the atrocities in Vietnam during Operation Rolling Thunder. In *Wichita Vortex Sutra*, Ginsberg's long-anticipated epic poem that is exemplary of auto-poesy, he clarifies,

The war is language,
language abused
for Advertisement,
language used
like magic for the power on the planet:
Black Magic language,
formulas for reality—
Communism is a 9 letter word
used by inferior magicians with
the wrong alchemical formula for transforming earth into gold

—funky warlocks operating on guesswork,
handmedown mandrake terminology
that never worked in 1956. (409)

The media's manufactured war language is juxtaposed by Ginsberg's spontaneous thoughts about the war machine upon driving through the Midwest as he heard firsthand the media's warping of truths on the radio. According to the prophet-poet's theory, the Vietnam War is language-magic akin to an alchemical formula derived from black magic. It is significant that these were his conclusions as he drove through what is metaphorized as the heart of this country: the Midwest.

In our collective cultural imagination, the Midwest—made up of those central states just east of the West—is the Heartland, the symbolic heart of this country. Middle America connotes some of the ideals and values exemplary of this country's identity: hard work, simplicity and honesty, and family values. In his monograph, *The Middle West: Its Meaning in American Culture*, James R. Shortridge explains that the Midwest is considered the birthplace of American identity in our collective cultural consciousness, but the reality is that no one regional identity exists; so, while for some the Midwest connotes idealism and democratic values, for others, like Ginsberg, it connotes blandness, materialism, and conservatism (Shortridge 1). Its inhabitants are, stereotypically, everything Dorothy's aunt and uncle represent in L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*: hard-working religious folk who are trusting of authority figures and who live on a bleak, albeit fertile, farm (2). In the 1939 film adaptation, which figures heavily in our cultural imagination of the Heartland, Dorothy pined to be in a place over the rainbow. I suggest that her urge to leave is due to the sublimity of the Midwest. Immanuel Kant's definition of the sublime pertains to the human encountering something vaster than the faculty of reason can fully comprehend, such that

imagination expands to attempt to capture the suprasensible, which is ultimately ungraspable. What occurs when faced with, for example, a sea of wheat fields that meet the horizon, is that the observer is "seized by *amazement* bordering on terror, by horror and a sacred thrill" due to "the mental agitation this arouses with the mind's state of rest" (Kant qtd. in Quinn 9). Couple this with the soundtrack of despair as the media continued on its black magic operation to convince the nation that the ongoing war was necessary and successful, and one finds one's self three ruby-red slipper clicks away from any comfortable reality.

As Ginsberg drove through highways that cut through fields dotted with farmhouses, he surmised that the Midwest is precisely where the media's black magic works best; it is the Vortex filled with inhabitants who are so representative of American identity that they drink in the language of war without any doubts or questions. At one point in the poem, "in the bus humming prophecy," he exclaims, "On to Wichita to prophesy! O frightful Bard! / into the heart of the Vortex / where anxiety rings" (Ginsberg, *Wichita* 412). Ginsberg's epithet of "Vortex" for an anxiety-filled Kansas—a sublime image in itself—derives from Baum's novel (Schumacher 459). The whirling cyclone that transported Dorothy from her home in Kansas to the surrealistic Oz is symbolic of how Ginsberg felt—"up up and away! / we're off, Thru America"—as he was transported well outside of his coastal familiarity to the Heartland (Ginsberg, "Hiway" 390). While he knew and respected poets like Michael McClure and Charles Plymell who were from Kansas, he passed judgment on the state due to the banning of his books and harassment by the police (Schumacher 459). These earlier feelings were compounded by being immersed in his own surrealistic reality where the barren landscape was symbolic of its culturally stifling environment. He

records this sentiment in "Hiway Poesy LA-Albuquerque-Texas-Wichita," which he composed during the same road trip:[62]

> Onward to Wichita!
> Onward to the Vortex!
> To the Birchite Hate Riddles,
> cock-detesting, pussy-smearing
> dry ladies and evil Police
> of Central Plains' State
> Where boredom & fury
> magick bars and sirens around
> the innocent citykid eye
> & Vampire stake of politics Patriotism's driven
> into the white breast of Teenage
> joyful murmurers. (396)

The Vortex is symbolic of intolerance and hatred of anything marked by its alterity, so for Ginsberg the Midwest is symbolic of mainstream society. Immense fear turned to hatred of the Other seemed to envelop him as he heard the black magic language of war on the radio (Carroll 309). Schumacher, author of *Dharma Lion: A Critical Biography of Allen Ginsberg* explains that for the prophet-poet, Kansas itself was emblematic of "the spiritually barren citizenship that blindly accepted the war edicts from Washington, D.C., its people as silent as its seemingly endless flatlands of wheat and corn" (Schumacher 459). In other words, for Ginsberg, Kansas was the nexus of the great American hallucination caused by capitalism and the media (Quinn 72). But how does he go about cracking the nation's consciousness, which blindly accepted, for instance, Republican Senator George Aiken's declaration that Robert McNamara simply made a "bad guess" when in 1962 he claimed, "eight thousand troops could handle the situation," which would be over in less than a year? (Aiken qtd. in Marcus, *The Shape* 274).

[62] While "Hiway Poesy LA-Albuquerque-Texas-Wichita" was published in *The Fall of America: Poems of These States 1965-1971*, the collection after *Planet News*, where *Wichita Vortex Sutra* was published, they were both composed on the same road trip.

Music on the radio, like that by "Angelic Dylan,"[63] interrupted falsified media accounts of the war, and led him to understand that the government and media's black language magic could be countered with another linguistic spell (Ginsberg, *Wichita* 417). His repetition of the phrase "three five zero zero" denotes the anti-war song from the late 1960's musical *Hair*, which is made up of a montage of war images, a cataloguing tactic Ginsberg uses in *Wichita Vortex Sutra* (407). By intertextualizing that song, he attempts to re-humanize the dehumanized victims of war, as he poignantly asks, "Has anyone looked into the eyes of the dead?" and "Has anyone looked into the eyes of the wounded?" (408). Pointed questions amid allusions to music heard on the radio, figures and quotes from the media, and his own thoughts about images from the Vortex gather together to create his own enactment of language magic that counters the black magic used by those "who loosed the bomb that's slaved all human consciousness / and made the body universe a place of fear" (414). Ginsberg elucidates his prophetic endeavor in crystalline language: "I lift my voice aloud, / make Mantra of American language now, / I here declare the end of the War!" (415). Just as mantras taught him, declaring something brings it into existence. So, he calls on all his spiritual leaders—from Blake to Jaweh—and becomes the first citizen to undeclare war, as if by saying it, it would come to pass.

It is significant that he presents his undeclaration in a poeticized tirade against the war machine that prioritizes profit over human life spontaneously into a tape recorder. Engaging in body-mind synchrony by way of auto-poesy, Ginsberg reaches into his faculty of spontaneous reason where he expresses his oneness with the Divine that he yearns for in a more widespread manner. After mentioning Allah, he exclaims, "Joy, I am I," which

[63] Ginsberg writes, "Angelic Dylan singing across the nation / …his youthful voice making glad / the brown endless meadows" (*Wichita* 417).

denotes I and I, the Rastafarian concept of the Divine subsumed within humanity, which is akin to One Life and the Over-Soul (Ginsberg, *Wichita* 405).[64] Conversely, using different names for the Divine is part of the black magic of language that separates humans, which leads far too easily to the dehumanization of Vietnamese victims of war. The concept of joy equated to I and I is one of Ginsberg's themes throughout. His spontaneous poetic rant which continuously circles back to language, "Language, language," promotes positive, unifying language magic to combat the media's black magic (404). This, then, is the prophecy he transmits to his reader, as he is "the lone One singing to myself / God come true" (405). His undeclaration of war in "the heart of the Vortex" comes from a moment of exemplary electric Romanticism, as he engages in spontaneity in an automobile on the road with "Electric machinery in the bus humming prophecy" (412).

Significantly, shortly after publishing *Wichita Vortex Sutra*, Ginsberg wrote a statement that explains his position: "The poet says the whole war's nothing but black magic caused by the wrong language / & authoritatively cancels all previous magic formulas & wipes out the whole war scene without further delay" (Schumacher 463). While the war did not officially end until the fall of Saigon in 1975, Ginsberg's prophetic undeclaration of war put into motion the union of likeminded members of the counterculture who opposed the war. This occurred few months later in January 1967 at the Human Be-In, an event that heralded the transition from Beat to Hippie movements. Ginsberg explained that the Human Be-In was designed to be a "gathering together of younger people aware of the planetary fate

[64] Interestingly, Rastafarians use Iyaric or their "Livalect," a dialect throughout which they replace any negativity with positivity, as a way to resist colonial English because they too believe in the magic of language. For instance, "Livalect" substitutes out the "die" sound for "live". In a similar fashion, they infuse a myriad of words with "I," because of their concept of I and I, or Jah within every being; for example, I-tal is their vegetarian food that is without preservatives, and "irie" is their version of "all right," which means positive feelings or goodness.

that we are all sitting in the middle of, embued [*sic*] with a new consciousness and desiring a new kind of society involving prayer, music and spiritual life together rather than competition, acquisition, and war" (Ginsberg qtd. in Schumacher 480). The Human Be-In and everything it stood for shepherded the Summer of Love later that year, which borrows conceptually from the Whitmanian notion of adhesiveness asserted in *Democratic Vistas* and in some poems, a concept Ginsberg proposes in *Wichita Vortex Sutra* as an oppositional solution to the war (Schumacher 460). In short, adhesiveness is comradery, like that encouraged by the Human Be-In.

In "A Supermarket in California," which was published in *Howl and Other Poems*, Ginsberg drolly asked Whitman, "Which way does your beard point tonight?" (8). Eleven years later, donning his own beard coupled with long hippie hair—no doubt a queer image for 1966 Kansans—Ginsberg drove through the Vortex, once again looking to Whitman as his proverbial North Star. Uncoincidentally, Ginsberg spontaneously composes a poem reminiscent of Whitman's own "Song of the Open Road," wherein the prophet-poet, inspired by Westward expansion, "take[s] to the open road, / Healthy, free, the world before me" and ruminates on the Swedenborgian concept that the Divine resides in every being (I.2). Ginsberg's allusion to the Rastafarian concept of I and I functions like Whitman's use of Swedenborgianism (though there is no other connection I know of between Emanuel Swedenborg and Rastafarianism).[65] Whitman refers to the Divine spark in each being as our inner wisdom, which he clarifies is not the sort of wisdom one learns in school, but instead, "Wisdom is of the soul, is not susceptible to proof, is its own proof" (Whitman, "Song"

[65] Emmanuel Swedenborg was a seventeenth-eighteenth-century mystic and philosopher who developed his own spiritual system based on Christianity, which Blake, Whitman, and other writers I have previously mentioned responded to.

VI.11). Soon after, as he contemplates all "philosophies and religions," he mentions adhesiveness:

> Where is he who tears off the husks for you and me?
> Where is he that undoes stratagems and envelops for you and me?
> Here is adhesiveness, it is not previously fashion'd, it is apropos;
> Do you know what it is as you pass to be loved by strangers? (Whitman, "Song" VI. 15, 21-24).

Adhesiveness is the "effux of the soul," which is inherent in every being; it is comradery suffused with happiness, because "The effux of the soul is happiness, here is happiness, / I think it pervades the open air, waiting at all times, / Now it flows unto us, we are rightly charged" (VII.1; VIII.1-3). Whitman's message of happiness flowing through fraternal relationships is precisely the message Ginsberg resuscitates nearly a century later, this time for a society marred by black magic language in desperate need of adhesiveness as a remedy.

Ginsberg as prophet-poet uses spontaneity to unhinge himself from the temporal and spatial moment amid the landscape of fields outside his Volkswagen camper windows, to a liminal place where he conjures Whitman's own prophetic call for adhesiveness. Ginsberg spontaneously links Whitman's prophecy as a remedy to his own sociocultural moment, as he realizes that the Heartland—and thereby, the nation—must learn to "love its own body before it is to be reborn. People must be free to embrace each other to break the spell that hangs over the vortex. In other words, physical affection—what Whitman called adhesiveness—is a necessary food to the human mammal[…]absolutely necessary for the survival of the species" (Ginsberg qtd. in Schumacher 460). As such, the prophecy of *Wichita Vortex Sutra* provides a viable solution that not only resists the war, but also revives a concept inherent to humanity: love. For Whitman, individualism is isolating, whereas

adhesiveness or comradery "fuses, ties, and aggregates, making the races comrades, and fraternizing all" (Whitman, *Democratic* 949).

In his book, *American Errancy: Empire, Sublimity and Modern Poetry*, Justin Quinn explains that Ginsberg was aware of the dangers of radical individualism, which he counters in his elongated poems by "'socialising' the sublime," an undertaking originated by Whitman when he realized the connection between sublimity and political activism (Quinn 2). Quinn suggests that in *Howl*, Ginsberg validates the transcendent vision of America he and his fellow visionaries had. In *Kaddish*, "he 'familiarises' the sublime, as a debate with his mother allows him to explore the connection between sublimity and American ideology"; and in *Wichita Vortex Sutra*, he extends the sublime formerly developed by shifting the focus from the individual portraiture used in *Howl* to landscape (2, 82). The fact that *Wichita Vortex Sutra* is a pastoral is central to its socialization of the sublime, because the prophet-poet reinfuses meaning into words like "land" and "soil," which have been "deployed symbolically by nationalism"; and nationalism is one of the ideologies that deploys black magic language that highlights separatism (84). Instead, Ginsberg who deploys adhesiveness creates an intersection between personal, geographical, and political guilt, and therefore socializes the sublime as the "imaginary of democratic ideology" conflated with "the phenomenological space of the individual" (86). That his socialization of the sublime ends with a prophetic declaration of the end of the war and a solution that is, quite simply, to love one another, is powerful. It is a noble desire that Carroll suggests likely "inspire[d] the creation of the mantra in the first place" (309). Ginsberg invokes "all Powers of imagination," Blake ("the invisible father of English visions"), and the various names humans have for the Divine, and

then proclaims, "I life my voice aloud, / make Mantra of American language now, I here declare the end of the War!" (Ginsberg, *Wichita* 414, 415).

While "The War is gone," the poem does not end there (416). Notably, in the final few lines of the poem, he comments incisively on the racism in the Vortex:

> The war is over now—
> Except for the souls
> held prisoner in N*ggertown[66]
> still pining for love of your tender white bodies O children of Wichita! (419)

He may have undeclared the war, but he knew that the nation still battled racism, still fell ill to the separating disease that arbitrarily casts one race as superior to another. By naming the vile slur, which popularly designated the black part of Wichita, Ginsberg ends his poem with a pointed remark about our colloquial language, which is permeated with black magic. The segregated language in the final lines is antithetical to Whitman's adhesiveness, which remains as Ginsberg's central prophetic message.

VII.

While other poems before and after *Wichita Vortex Sutra* express a strong prophetic voice, I believe it is the epic Ginsberg expressed desire to write in his *Paris Review* interview. It is emblematic of Ginsberg as prophet-poet, as it fully exemplifies the New Vision, which comes from that Rimbaudian attempt to "create a sense of order through the writing itself," through using the writer's phenomenological experience as content (Schumacher 51-52). It exemplifies electric Romanticism and its message is still relevant today. Further, *Wichita Vortex Sutra* epitomizes the fusion of mysticism and politics, which is so typical in of Ginsberg's oeuvre, such that it spotlights his unique poetics, which are inflected by his

[66] My asterisk, because I am uncomfortable with typing out the slur, even though I understand why Ginsberg used it.

youthful interest in law. The poem showcases an evolution in his spiritual journey, which is a result of biographical events like the 1948 vision and "The Change." Lastly, as a prophet-poet who inhabits that that previously mentioned liminal space where he communes with "Joy, I am I" and Whitman, he writes from the faculty of spontaneous reason, as he becomes the intermediary between the Divine and humanity (Ginsberg, *Wichita* 405). It seems as though Ginsberg prophesized this in 1949 in a poem from *Empty Mirror*: "I am living in Eternity. / The ways of this world / are the ways of Heaven" ("Metaphysics" 6-8).

In his book *The Shape of Things to Come: Prophecy and the American Voice,* Greil Marcus writes, "when the prophet speaks to the nation, the nation speaks to itself" (202). For Marcus, the prophet is someone who, "with the proper disguises," can speak for the nation (16). This precisely the role Ginsberg occupies in *Wichita Vortex Sutra*, the epic poem he always wanted to write, whose poignant prophecy about language and war strikes as powerful as verse by prophets in the Hebrew Bible as well as Blake's and Whitman's. In Ginsberg's sutra—a word for Buddhist scripture—he personifies the prophet-poet, who is apart from, yet fully entrenched in society. He, like Blake, is "the neurotic, homosexual outside, surreptitiously undermining society from within; while at the same time renouncing the impossible task of trying to understand infection by the enemy, the forces of repression, bourgeois morality and the capitalist system" (Larrissy 9). Just as Blake spoke to him in his vision in 1948, Ginsberg speaks boldly to his audience through time, because, even though the Vietnam War eventually ended and the Civil Rights Movement was successful, we are plagued by black magic language today, reinvented for the contemporary moment to cast us under the same spell. While the catalogues in *Wichita Vortex Sutra* come from the sociopolitical landscape of 1966, the message still applies to readers now, as our Heartland is

leached by slogans like "Make America Great Again," spine-chilling claims of "fake news!" that evoke John Birch Society propaganda, and bipartisan separatism antithetical to adhesiveness.

"Strike Another Match, Go Start Anew": Bob Dylan's Visionary Period, Side One

I.

Martin Scorsese's *Rolling Thunder Revue: A Bob Dylan Story* contains some of the most recent interviews with Bob Dylan. In the film, the Nobel Laureate says, "You only tell the truth when you're wearing a mask," which is a concept he borrows from René Descartes' assertion, "*Larvatus prodeo*," Latin for "I go forward, masked," like an actor (qtd. in Courtney 906).[67] Scorsese uses this concept of truth revealed only by the masked who performs as a framing concept for his film about Dylan's anti-corporate, all pop-up, vaudeville tour in the mid-1970s throughout which the rock troubadour dons either whiteface or a translucent, wax-like mask during every performance. The literal masks Dylan wears throughout the Rolling Thunder Revue represent just some of the myriad figurative masks that together define his position as an ever-evolving figure who, like French rebel poet Arthur Rimbaud, constantly self-fashions and reinvents himself in order to continue being "absolutely modern" (Rimbaud, "Farewell" 209).

In the film, Dylan explains, "Life is about creating yourself, creating things," such that he situates the self as ripe for artistic expression. This chapter concentrates on one of Dylan's first transformations: from Woody Guthrie imitator during his folk period into a

[67] Descartes' journal goes on, "as actors put on a mask, lest they be shamefaced, so I, on entering the stage of the world, in which hitherto I have been a spectator, come before the audience masked" (qtd. in Courtney 906).

"mod rocker" and visionary poet of the mid-1960s.[68] It was during this period in the couple years prior to his motorcycle accident in July of 1966 that Dylan "br[oke] with the earlier tradition of political protest music that had made him famous" and instead leapt into hallucinatory abstraction (Hampton, "Absolutely" 5).[69] Dylan did not want to "work on Maggie's Farm no more," where agricultural manual labor denotes folk's acoustic guitar, and he informed "Baby Blue," a character representative of the folk movement and perhaps even a younger, folkier Dylan, "Strike another match, go start anew / And it's all over now, baby blue" (Dylan "Maggie's"; "It's All"). "Maggie's Farm" and "It's All Over Now, Baby Blue" are prominently featured on *Bringing It All Back Home* (1965), the first of three blues-inspired rock albums, which I refer to as the visionary albums, along with *Highway 61 Revisited* (1965) and *Blonde on Blonde* (1966). Together, the visionary albums testify to his Rimbaudian endeavor to continuously be "absolutely modern," to mine older genres such as blues and country blues to create a new genre: rock. These albums break from the folk style that

[68] "Mod" is a term that sprung up in the early 1960s, which is defined as "a young person belonging to a subculture preoccupied with smart, stylish dress," and which the Oxford English Dictionary explains, "beg[an] as a reaction among teenagers to the rigid social conventions still prevailing in Britain at the time." Other important aspects of the mod movement are eclectic musical tastes—ranging from blues, soul, and ska—as well as a penchant for fashion ("Mod"). In Britain, there was a contentious relationship between mods and rockers; however, in the States, Dylan conflated the two subcultures as soon as he plugged in: "The teenage throng was bitterly divided between New York equivalents of Mods and Rockers. The Mods—folk purists, new leftists, and sensitive collegians—came to hear Dylan's macabre surrealist poems like 'Gates of Eden' and 'A Hard Rain Is Gonna Fall' [*sic*]. But the Rockers—and East Village pothead [*sic*]—came to stomp their feet to Dylan's more recent explorations of electric 'folk rock'" (Newfield qtd. in Harvilla).

[69] Dylan had wanted out of the "rat race" of touring and the motorcycle accident provided him with the occasion to withdraw (Dylan, *Chronicles* 114). He would not tour again for almost eight years; and during this time, he cultivated his familial life, made music with the Band, which Columbia released as *The Basement Tapes* (1975), edited D. A. Pennebaker's footage of the 1966 tour to create *Eat the Document* (1972), and wrote and recorded *John Wesley Harding* (1967), *Nashville Skyline* (1968), *Self Portrait* (1969), and several other studio albums. The album art, Western sound, and lyrical content of *John Wesley Harding* are all indicative of yet another mask Dylan wore after that during his visionary period. Songs like "I am a Lonesome Hobo" and "I Dreamed I Saw St. Augustine" stand in utter contrast with songs from the three visionary albums, as well as 1967's psychedelic musical landscape, which includes albums like the Beatles' *Sgt. Peppers and the Lonely Hearts Club Band*, Big Brother and the Holding Company's self-titled debut album, Cream's *Disraeli Gears*, The Doors' *The Doors* and *Strange Days*, Jefferson Airplane's *Surrealistic Pillow* and *After Bathing at Baxter's*, The Jimi Hendrix Experience's *Are You Experienced?* and *Axis: Bold as Love*, Pink Floyd's *The Piper at the Gates of Dawn,* and Traffic's *Mr. Fantasy.*

defines his first three albums, and—along with their precursor *Another Side of Bob Dylan* (1964), which functions as the intermediary—collectively define a new phase in Dylan's career: the visionary period. Contrary to popular belief, in his visionary period, Dylan does not cease to protest. While Dylan moved on from writing folk aphorisms against racism, the war, and other specific objects of revolt, he applied a Rimbaudian visionary poetics funneled through the Beat New Vision in order to direct his protest at the status quo at large. By doing so, he perhaps inadvertently catalyzed the countercultural revolution of the 1960s.

II.

It was December 5, 1965, a foggy San Francisco morning, and Beat poets Allen Ginsberg, Michael McClure, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, and others met in an alley next to City Lights Bookshop for what has ever since been referred to as the Last Gathering of the Beats.[70] Dylan joined in with his backing guitarist and creative collaborator Robbie Robertson.[71] The resulting photos (shot by Larry Keenan and Dale Smith) are pictorial representations of the zeitgeist of the mid- to late-1960s, when the music and literature sister arts became interwoven and functioned symbiotically as the fabric of the counterculture. In his memoir *Testimony*, Robertson recalls, "This get-together was a moment. I had come to appreciate the strong link between Bob and the Beat poets. Before Bob, nobody had written

[70] Among the gatherers at Alder Alley, which was renamed Jack Kerouac Alley in 2007, were poets Lew Welch, Daniel Langton, Peter Orlovsky, Larry Fagin, and Richard Brautigan, musician and poet David Meltzer, artists Robert LaVigne and Nemi Frost, and City Lights clerk Shigeyoshi "Shig" Murao (who was notably arrested in 1957 for distributing Ginsberg's "obscene" *Howl and Other Poems*); Ferlinghetti later said that the "Last Gathering of the Beats" is a misnomer, because notable Beats like Kerouac, William S. Burroughs, and Gary Snyder were not present, and because there were indeed more gatherings to come. However, the name stuck among Beat scholarly circles.

[71] Canadian guitarist and vocalist of the Hawks, which reinvented itself into the Band in 1964 when they split from Ronnie Hawkins. In 1965, they began touring with Dylan, with whom they collaborated often until their last tour in 1976, whose final performance in San Francisco was documented by Martin Scorsese and released as *The Last Waltz* (1978).

songs overflowing with the kind of imagery he conjured; he shared with these writers a fearlessness when it came to pushing lyrics" (Robertson 200). This fearlessness is represented in "It's Alright, Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)," whose every line is saturated with vivid images, and in "Tombstone Blues," which uses comic absurdity reminiscent of that in poems by poets Gregory Corso and Lawrence Ferlinghetti. These songs are representative of Dylan's self-fashioned evolution from protest folk-rock artist to surrealistic rock poet, an evolution made possible by his fraternity with Ginsberg and the Beats. His new mask resulted in his becoming one of the key figures responsible for developing rock 'n' roll—represented by Chuck Berry, Buddy Holly, and Elvis—to rock, its more serious and poetic child.[72] Similar to Robertson's sentiments, in his book *Drugs, Text, and Rock 'n' Roll*, Simon Warner explains that Dylan was the leader of the "caravan that linked rock and literature," a relationship that argue is one of the key characteristics of the countercultural revolution of the 1960s (Warner 17).

The Last Gathering is symbolic of the fact that the Beat ethos is woven into the fabric of rock as spearheaded by Dylan. Likewise, the Last Gathering illustrates that the conflation of high and low art, and the infusion of the cerebral with the visceral are central to 1960's counterculture. Dylan's presence at the Last Gathering is emblematic of the essential nature of the era's rock music's "escap[e] from its musical bonds…As rock moved closer to poetry, [and] literature moved closer to rock" (13). Dylan's first few albums are significant to the topic of his song-poetry, since they are what cast him as the "voice of his

[72] There is heavy racial tension in the evolution from rock 'n' roll to rock that, while fascinating, is irrelevant to this particular discussion on Dylan.

generation."[73] These albums fuse American genres like folk, blues, and country blues together with English ballads, Biblical allusions, and even poems lacking traditional melodic devices (as in "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall") to manifest and articulate his generation's discontent. Early albums such as *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan* and *The Times They Are A-Changin'* began to influence other early rockers; however, I am more interested in what he was creating during his prolific period from 1965–1966. Some refer to this as his electric period, but I prefer visionary period. While "electric period" is accurate, as he shook the folk world by plugging in, which is a radical gesture representative of electric Romanticism, this period is marked by a palpable shift from political folk narrative accounts of the protest ilk to more abstract, more personal, surrealistic, and psychological song-poems. Therefore, that he shifted from acoustic to electric is significant, but the shift is ultimately an expression of his new identity as visionary rock poet, a mask he put on after meeting Ginsberg. The two first met at a house party in 1963 and more intimately when the howling poet joined Dylan's entourage on his UK tour in the Summer of 1965 (Warner 18). I argue that "visionary period" more precisely encapsulates the period, *especially* as Dylan was cultivating his relationship with the prophet-poet, whom he refers to as the Oracle at Delphi who "didn't care about material wealth or political power; who was his own king" (Dylan qtd. in *Rolling Thunder*).

Consequently, the impetus behind this shift from folk visionary rocker is marked by his budding friendship with Ginsberg, and it manifests cogently with Dylan's exposure to the

[73] Dylan has resisted this title since the "Blowin' in the Wind" (*The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan*, 1963) era. In 2016 after receiving the news of his Nobel Prize in Literature win, he was interviewed by Steve Inskeep of NPR and explained, "Having these colossal accolades and titles—they get in the way" of his job as singer and performer ("Bob Dylan"). However, as Rob Horning of *Dissent Magazine* makes clear, it is Dylan's sheer resistance that earns him the title: "But like a hipster marked by his rejection of the label, Dylan remained the voice of a generation precisely by refusing" ("The Voice").

Beats' New Vision. I have elsewhere explained that the New Vision is the Beat manifesto theorized by Ginsberg, Lucien Carr, and Jack Kerouac, which took inspiration foremost from Rimbaud's visionary poetics. Warner, a British Beat scholar who writes on the relationship between the Beat movement and rock, defines the New Vision as "a radical statement of artistic intent which praised experiment, discounted conventional morality and, at heart, responded to the psychic crisis of a world torn by conflict" (24). According to Rimbaud, this "radical statement of artistic intent" Warner discusses is the byproduct of rigorous study of the self, which helps unshackle the poet and their subsequent work from constraining literary conventions. Ginsberg and Kerouac employed this method religiously, and their resulting work is indeed defined as the "truthful self-expression of one's own experience" (Tonkinson 90). This dedicated self-examination is made possible through what Rimbaud refers to as a "*derangement* of *all the senses*" (Rimbaud, "To Paul" 307).

After exhausting his first mask as untutored Woody Guthrie imitator who told all sorts of colorful and circus-like stories about a feigned biographical past—which obscured the truth that he was raised by a middle-class Jewish family in rural Minnesota—Dylan became weary of pandering to the folk community. On February 11, 1964, when he was loyally enacting Rimbaud's "*derangement* of *all the senses*," as he ping-ponged from weed to wine at Mardi Gras, he reportedly told his buddy Pete Karman, "Rimbaud's where it's at. That's the kind of stuff that means something. That's the kind of writing I'm gonna do" (Dylan qtd. in Heylin 220). In an effort to continuously be "absolutely modern," later that year Dylan released *Another Side of Bob Dylan*, which commences his move away from topical protest toward commentary on the human condition (Rimbaud, "Farewell" 209). Then, in 1965, he plugged in, and to which folk audiences responded with a resounding, "Judas!"

III.

Two days prior to the Last Gathering of the Beats, on December 3, 1965, Ginsberg and McClure sat in the KQED audience while Dylan was perched on a raised platform chain-smoking and shaking his leg as he answered questions about "anything you want to talk about" at the now-famous San Francisco press conference (qtd. in Gleason, "Bob"). It was the afternoon before his performance at the Berkeley Community Theater and Dylan was in a relatively cheerful mood, periodically bringing the audience of journalists and poet friends to laughter. In typical Dylanesque dry humor, when asked if he thought of himself primarily as a singer or a poet, he drolly responded, "Oh, I think of myself more as a song and dance man, y'know" (qtd. in Gleason, "Bob"). When asked which poets he "digs," Dylan quickly responded, "Rimbaud, I guess," and then followed up with a shortlist featuring Ginsberg (qtd. in Gleason, "Bob"). The discussion soon turned towards a surface analysis of his music by the crowd's Mr. Joneses.[74] This part of the conversation could easily have gone another way, as Dylan in the midst of his electrification controversy: it was only months after he was booed at the Newport Folk Festival for having gone electric. "I don't

[74] In "Ballad of a Thin Man," a protest song about the media, Mr. Jones is a caricature of the type of journalist who would annoy Dylan—particularly during his shift from folk rocker to visionary rocker—with tedious questions about his status in the folk world and what his lyrics *really* mean. In the song, Mr. Jones, who "put[s] your eyes in your pocket and your nose on the ground," is a spectator at a freak show, where "something is happening and you don't know what it is" (Dylan, "Ballad of a Thin Man"). A reporter named Jeffrey Jones came forward as the song's subject in a 1975 *Rolling Stone* article, in which he explained the events of his attempt to interview Dylan at the 1965 Newport Folk Festival (Jones). However, in 1985, Dylan told Bill Flanagan, "There were a lot of Mr. Joneses at that time…It was like, 'Oh man, here's the thousandth Mister Jones'" (qtd. in Heylin 322). For more on "The Ballad of a Thin Man," please see the next chapter. Interestingly, some Dylan scholars argue that he was not indeed booed for going electric at the 1965 Newport Folk Festival, but instead because the audience could not hear him and the band properly due to poor audio rigging. Regardless of the reason behind the boos, the booing bug took hold and spread to other audiences, as Dylan explains in the KQED press conference, "Oh, there's booing—you can't tell where the booing's going to come up. Can't tell at all. It comes up in the weirdest, strangest places and when it comes up it's quite a thing in itself" (qtd. in Gleason, "Bob Dylan…Part II"). I explicate this song in the following chapter.

play folk-rock," he responded quite simply to a question about his shift from folk to folk-rock (qtd. in Gleason, "Bob").

The journalists followed up with questions about how Dylan would classify his music and whether or not the words are more important than the music, to which he answered, "I like to think of it more in terms of *vision music*…The words are just as important as the music. There would be no music without the words" (qtd. in Gleason, "Bob"; emphasis mine). The fact that Dylan himself refers to the 1965-1966 material as *vision music* is of utmost importance, as he casts those three albums I focus on into a transcendental category. But what exactly does he mean by *vision music*? One quality is the method of composition, which he expounds upon later in the press conference:

> [Writing on a subliminal level is] the difference in the songs I write now…in the last year and a half, maybe two, I don't know—the songs before, up till one of these records, I wrote the fourth record in Greece—there was a change there—but the records before that, I used to know what I wanted to say, before I used to write the song. All the stuff which I had written before which wasn't song, was just one piece of toilet paper…But I just went through that other thing of writing songs I couldn't write like it anymore. It was just too easy and it wasn't really "right." I would start out, I would know what I wanted to say before I wrote the song and would say it, you know, and it would never come out exactly the way I thought it would…but now, I just write a song, like I *know* that it's just going to be all right and I don't really know exactly what it's all about, but I do know the minutes and the layers of what it's all about. (qtd. in Gleason, "Bob…Part II")

In this answer to a question about writing on a subliminal level, Dylan draws distinction between his folk period, which ends with *The Times They Are A-Changin'* (released in January of 1964) and the fourth record, *Another Side of Bob Dylan* (released in August of 1964), where he begins to experiment with his own spontaneous method not unlike Kerouac's spontaneous bop prosody and Ginsberg's auto-poesy. Whereas for his first three albums Dylan says he "used to know what [he] wanted to say" before composition, he makes clear that he altered his writing method with *Another Side* through to the material he was writing

and recording at the time of the press conference, which ultimately became *Blonde on Blonde* (released in June of 1966).[75] Dylan poetically highlights the shift in the refrain of "My Back Pages," a track on *Another Side*: "Ah, but I was so much older then, I'm younger than that now." His distinguishes his folk past as "Equality[…]as if a wedding vow," as he aims his "hand at the mongrel dogs who teach," and he declares a new self-transformative period in which he dialectically breaks with the past, as he is "younger than that now" (Dylan, "My Back"). As Anthony Hampton explains in his aptly titled article, "Absolutely Modern: Dylan, Rimbaud, and Visionary Song," the break with the past is created by "Self-transformation [that] comes through a dialectical act of rewriting that involves both continuity and change" (5).

The "dialectical act of rewriting" was both thoughtful and purposeful. In Fall of 1964 at the Columbia studio where he was about to record "My Back Pages," Dylan told Nat Hentoff,

> Me, I don't want to write *for* people anymore. You know—be a spokesman[…]From now on, I want to write from inside me, and to do that I'm going to have to get back to writing like I used to when I was ten—having everything come out naturally. The way I like to write is for it to come out the way I walk or talk. (qtd. in Hentoff)

Instead of writing "*for* people anymore," he thoughtfully strived to write more like Beats poets such as Kerouac and Ginsberg, from his interior landscape. Therefore, for Dylan, vision music is markedly different from what he was writing before 1964; it is song-poetry that draws from the subliminal, as it is written more spontaneously, and the content comes

[75] In his comprehensive book based on the chronology of Dylan's songwriting, *Revolution in the Air: The Songs of Bob Dylan, Vol. 1: 1957-73*, Clinton Heylin explains that "Visions of Johanna" "had certainly been written by the turn of the year," and by January and February of 1966, Dylan was recording songs like "One of Us Must Know (Sooner or Later)," "Leopard-Skin Pill-Box Hat," "Most Likely You Go Your Way (And I'll Go Mine)," and "Sad-Eyed Lady of the Lowlands," "Stuck Inside of Mobile With the Memphis Blues Again," among others (342, 347, 350, 375, 358, 362). Therefore, in December of 1965, he was certainly working on *Blonde on Blonde*.

from within rather than in reaction to the exterior. This visionary period begins with a self-transformation into new consciousness; and this is the sort of self-fashioning typical of Rimbaud, the rebel father of visionary poetics, who is an exemplar for myriad American artists, ranging from Dylan, the Doors' Jim Morrison, punk poet Patti Smith, to grunge rocker Kurt Cobain, and others. Hampton clarifies that Rimbaudian self-fashioning resonates with those who come from "outside the corridors of power," particularly from post-war periods, which certainly describes Robert Allen Zimmerman,[76] Jewish boy raised in middle-class Hibbing, Minnesota in the 1940s (Hampton, "Absolutely" 3). A retrospective glance at Dylan's career shows his multiple attempts at self-fashioning, which many Dylan scholars refer to as his various masks, a term that Rimbaud scholar Wallace Fowlie also ascribes to the French poet (Fowlie 37).

Dylan visibly performed the mask concept throughout his *Rolling Thunder Revue* tour from 1975-1976 when he wore whiteface and translucent masks; but, less ostensibly, he has been shifting from figurative mask to mask since the onset of his career. His first self-titled album is filled with revisions of old blues and folk standards along with two original compositions ("Talkin' New York" and "Song to Woody") in Woody Guthrie's talking blues form.[77] Dave Van Ronk, who hosted and mentored Dylan in the early 1960s in Greenwich Village, recalls that while Dylan built himself a façade as "an untutored Woody Guthrie imitator," that was "simply part of his persona," or his first public mask (qtd. in Hampton, "Absolutely" 4). Van Ronk explains that in fact Dylan was "reading modern French poetry

[76] Dylan's given name. By 1962 when he signed with Columbia, he was already using his stage name that would eventually become his legal name. He references his given name scantly, such as in "Gotta Serve Somebody" from *Slow Train Coming* (1979): "You may call me Bobby, you may call me Zimmy."

[77] Talking blues is a folk and country music form, which is essentially rhythm speech set to music. It usually contains rhyming couplets, which keep the metre.

'very carefully"' (qtd. in Hampton, "Absolutely" 4). Such a self-fashioned façade is indicative of a faculty for profound reinvention, as evidenced by his evolution from "untutored Woody Guthrie imitator" who dropped on the New York scene regenerating old blues and folk standards, to the "spokesman of his generation," who boldly protests on *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan* (1963) and *The Times They Are A-Changin'* (1964), to a full-fledged rocker who writes abstract and psychological lyrics wherein a rambling Albert Einstein disguises himself as Robin Hood and bums cigarettes on Desolation Row and "the sun isn't yellow, it's chicken" (qtd. in Hampton, "Absolutely" 4; Dylan, "Desolation"; "Tombstone").

During his folk protest period, Dylan was engaged in a deep study of his self, which is Rimbaudian poetics' procedure. For instance, "Girl from the North Country" is a meditation about a woman he loved and "Bob Dylan's Dream" reflects his nostalgia for old Hibbing friends he left when he moved to New York City.[78] However, on the same album is a song like "North Country Blues," which, while also waxing nostalgic for his simpler life in Minnesota, obscures facts about his life, as he positions himself as someone with vastly different life experiences than those he actually endured. As Van Ronk points out, Dylan as folk rocker is itself a mask, a mask that has markedly different characteristics to his next mask as visionary poet. We know from Dylan himself about his writing process during his folk period that he "would know what [he] wanted to say before [he] wrote the song and would say it" (qtd. in Gleason, "Bob…Part II"). He self-consciously shifts to the Rimbaudian visionary mode when he began toying with the more subliminal composition style in 1964 with *Another Side* which he refines in the music from his visionary period. As Fowlie explains, Rimbaud's perspective of the poet "is the man who first looks at reality,

[78] The subject of "Girl from the North Country" is either about his high school sweetheart, Echo Helstrom or Bonnie Beecher, his Minneapolis girlfriend (Heylin 145).

then turns away from it and into himself" (Fowlie 57). This poetic method is more along the lines of what Dylan told Nat Hentoff in the Columbia studio in 1964: "I want to write from inside me[…]having everything come out naturally" (Dylan qtd. in Hentoff). This Rimbaudian process Dylan engages in is evocative of the Beats' New Vision, as it is similar to Kerouac's method, yet more parallel to Ginsberg's process; because Dylan and Ginsberg both pull from the interior to comment upon their sociopolitical reality.

Dylan's experimentation with the Rimbaudian method is apparent in the differences between "Girl from the North Country"—the song I just mentioned about a past love, in which he repeats, "Remember me to one who lives there," so as to create distance between his already-calloused feelings and the female subject—and "Love Minus Zero/No Limit," a song about Sara Lownds whom he would marry in November of 1965 (Dylan, "Girl"). Whereas "Girl from the North Country" is a typical folk song in that it stays true to a ballad-like structure, its lyrics are accompanied with a simple guitar, and the subject, who "once was a true love of mine," is a distant figure travelers may come across if they happen upon the North country, "Love Minus Zero/No Limit" is an ethereal litany of vignettes that somehow connect to "My love [who] laughs like flowers," the woman who is "true like ice, like fire," and who "knows too much to argue or to judge" ("Girl"; "Love"). How does a seemingly occult scene concerning the "ceremonies of the horseman" or the chattering in the "dime stores and bus stations" connect to "My love"? ("Love"). These disparate life experiences he draws from a process of sense derangement clearly made him think of Sara, which is not only a fair definition of love, but also an enactment of an early attempt at visionary poetics. "Love Minus Zero/No Limit" honors his seemingly erratic thought process arranged by a spontaneous compositional method, as opposed to the more

traditionally constructed "Girl from the North Country" that emblemizes his folk rock period when "I used to know what I wanted to say, before I used to write the song" (qtd. in Gleason, "Bob…Part II").

IV.

Central to Rimbaud's poetics and his worldview is the fact that within the interior landscape of a person, there is a difference between *me* and *I*. Whereas *me* is the essential personhood truly only discernable to the person her/himself, *I* is the construct the person presents to the exterior world. Rimbaud explains this concept in a letter to Paul Demeny, dated May 15, 1871:

> For *I* is someone else. If brass wakes a trumpet, it is not its fault. That is quite clear to me. This is obvious to me: I am present at this birth of my thought: I watch it and listen to it: I draw a stroke of the bow: the symphony makes its stir in the depths, or comes on to the stage in a leap. (305)

If the essential nature of *I* is marked by alterity—"For *I* is someone else,"—then an individual has control over how s/he represents her/his *I* to the exterior world; therefore, the *I* is equipped for malleability in terms of self-fashioning, hence the possibility for interchangeable masks. Rimbaud goes onto write, "The first study of a man who wants to be a poet is the knowledge of himself, complete. He looks for his soul, inspects it, tests it, learns it. As soon as he knows it, he must cultivate it!" (307). The "*I* is someone else" manifests as soon as young Robert Zimmerman, who, having studied himself so completely and profoundly, creates the fictional construct of Bob Dylan by which he writes, sings, and performs his perception of reality, or in his own words, "The way I like to write is for it to come out of the way I walk or talk" (Dylan qtd. in Hentoff).

Perception of reality here is the operative concept when it comes to visionary poetics, because the resulting art is composed of life experiences funneled through the self's

perception. As opposed to his earlier style of folk song-narratives about others' suffering and injustice (as in "The Ballad of Hollis Brown" and "The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll") or protest song-poetry that vilifies and castigates power structures (as in "Masters of War," "Only a Pawn in Their Game," and the deliciously sardonic "With God on Our Side"), Dylan shifts his focus to his own interiority, which causes him to write in an entirely new way. Take, for example, "Chimes of Freedom"—on *Another Side*, which I have previously noted is the album Dylan pinpoints as his shift from folk to visionary, from exterior to interior, from contrived to subliminal—in which the singer finds refuge from a storm in a church. Here, the central image of the "Chimes of Freedom" is indicative both of the physical church bells and more figuratively evocative of the storm itself: "As the echo of the wedding bells before the blowin' rain / Dissolved into the bells of lightning / Tolling for the rebel, tolling for the rake" (Dylan, "Chimes"). The importance of this excerpt is twofold. First, Dylan engages in the literary concept T. S. Eliot theorizes in his essay "Hamlet," "objective correlative," a means of evoking emotion by listing "a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that *particular* emotion." The bells' ringing and the sublime sounds of the thunderstorm comingle and strike the observer on an emotional level, which he translates to his listener who, according to Eliot, would too feel that emotion. The fact that Dylan wrote this spontaneously intensifies the import of imagery evoking emotion, because his process is similar to Charles Olson's projective verse, Kerouac's spontaneous bop prosody, and Ginsberg's auto-poesy.

It is significant to note that Dylan met Ginsberg five weeks before composing "Chimes of Freedom," so it is no coincidence that the litany of those on the fringes of society the transcendental bells toll for parallels that used in Beat poetry. For example, the

first part of *Howl* invokes a plethora of examples of "the best minds" who are "destroyed by madness," "the angelheaded hipsters" who "bur[n] for the ancient heavenly connection to the starry dynamo in the machinery of night" (Heylin 216; Ginsberg, *Howl* 134). Clinton Heylin, a Dylan scholar who has worked closely in the archives,[79] explains that in an earlier draft of "Chimes of Freedom," Dylan "envisages the chimes striking 'for the poet an [*sic*] the painter who reflect their given time'," which, like Beat philosophy, places artists in the category of societal outliers who are apart from and therefore most adept at commenting on society (qtd. in Heylin 217). Consequently, Dylan's personal vision *becomes* social vision: his own experience of the episode in the church as the storm roars is a transcendental vision for society. While "Chimes" does not contain the developed cast of characters or hallucinatory abstraction that later visionary songs possess, it is one of his first attempts at writing in the visionary poetic mode for the purpose of a collective project of social justice. As Seth Rogovoy notes in his book, *Bob Dylan: Prophet, Mystic, Poet*, the song is representative of the "transcendent vision of universal freedom and justice for all" *without* stating this explicitly as Dylan likely would have in his first three albums (69). Thus, "Chimes" exemplifies the shift that occurred with *Another Side*, as the album "breaks with topical protest to commentate on the human tradition," which begins with a study of the interior a la Rimbaud and popularizes Beat poetics to the airwaves (67).

In that same letter to Demeny in which Rimbaud explains that "*I* is someone else," he goes on to explain how, after a profound self-study, a poet can achieve the visionary state:

I say one must be a *seer*, make oneself a *seer*.

[79] In March of 2016, it was announced that George Kaiser of the Kaiser Family Foundation acquired Dylan's archives: an extensive vault of material from the Bob Dylan Music Company ranging from photographs, lyric notebooks, letters, and hours of video footage (musical and otherwise). In 2021, the Bob Dylan Center will open in Tulsa with access to the archives for scholars.

> A Poet makes himself a *seer* through a long, gigantic and rational *disorganization* of *all the senses*. All forms of love, suffering, and madness. He searches himself. He exhausts all poisons in himself and keeps only their quintessences. Unspeakable torture where he needs all his faith, all his superhuman strength, where he becomes among all men the great patient, the great criminal, the one accursed—and the Supreme Scholar!—Because he reaches the *unknown*! Since he cultivated his soul, rich already, more than any man! He reaches the unknown, and when, bewildered, he ends by losing the intelligence of his visions, he has seen them. (Rimbaud, "To Paul" 307)[80]

For Rimbaud, reaching the transcendental state is a process that the visionary poet must manifest for herself, which is evidenced by his use of phrases like "se faire," "*make* yourself," and "il cherche lui-même," or "He *searches* himself" (emphasis mine). Shortly after, he says that this process occurs as the poet "leaps through unheard of and unable things[…]they will begin from the horizons where the other one collapsed," which means a deep dive into the psyche (307). This is precisely what Dylan does with *Bringing It All Back Home* and the two visionary albums that follow: *Highway 61 Revisited* and *Blonde on Blonde*. In 1966, he told Margaret Steen of his shift,

> I used to have to go after a song, seek it out. But now, instead of going to it, I stay where I am and let everything disappear and the song rushes to me. Not just the music, the words, too… What I'm doing now you can't learn by studying, you can't copy it. (qtd. in Heylin 362)

While he does indeed borrow from Rimbaud and the Beats for the purposes of process, the results are entirely unique to Dylan, as he has individual "intelligence of his visions." Recall Victor Cousin's explanation of the two-fold development of reason explained in the Overture and elsewhere, by which the artist who engages in spontaneity reaches through to spontaneous reason, the primitive faculty of reason where creativity is born because of access to universal consciousness. The artist then funnels their creation through reflection

[80] It is important to note that while I prefer this translation because I believe it closely honors the French, in Paul Schmidt's (HarperCollins, 1976) translation, he uses "seer" instead of "visionary." Rimbaud uses the term *voyant*, which does indeed translate to "seer," but Schmidt's "visionary" is intriguing.

reason, which is where subjectivity emerges, rendering the prophetic art idiosyncratic. Therefore, while Dylan's process is informed by his visionary mentors, as he rightly claims, the results of his visionary process cannot be "learn[ed] by studying" or copied, because they derive solely from the singer's mind, the singer's "thought-dreams" (Dylan, "It's Alright").

V.

The first few seconds of *Bringing It All Back Home* make it evident that Dylan had put on a new mask in an effort to keep "absolutely modern" by embarking on a new era of his career. Its first track, "Subterranean Homesick Blues," begins with an acoustic guitar, but within a moment, the electric guitar strums through and is quickly followed by the accompanying rhythm section (drums and bass guitar). Form and content work symbiotically as a countercultural gesture, because lyrically, "Subterranean Homesick Blues" is an abstract and chaotic song-poem with heightened Beat sensibility, which sounds precisely like a catalogue of images and vignettes that "rush[ed]" to him (Dylan qtd. in Heylin 362). Without any chorus or traditional song conventions for the audience to reference, "Subterranean Homesick Blues" functions like a Beat poem or a Kerouacian prose-poetic vignette, as it follows the micronarrative of Johnny who is in the basement "Mixing up the medicine" and the singer who is "on the pavement / Thinking about the government," both of which are countercultural, anti-establishment procedures.[81]

What follows is a dizzying list of societal conventions Johnny and the singer—both of whom are representative of the countercultural youth—are faced with. "Look out kid,"

[81] "Medicine" could either literally be medicine, which Johnny makes instead of buying at the pharmacy, or some sort of illicit drug or alternative medicine that cannot be purchased in conventional drug stores; either way, Johnny's actions require concealment in a basement, so it is safe to assume what he is doing is somehow unlawful.

exclaim the unnamed members of the status quo who endeavor to fetter the youth with society's arbitrary rules, such as,

> Better stay away from those
> That carry around a fire hose
> Keep a clean nose
> Watch the plain clothes
> …
> Learn to dance, get dressed, get blessed
> Try to be a success
> Please her, please him, buy gifts
> Don't steal, don't lift. (Dylan, "Subterranean")

The countercultural youth could choose to be stilted by societal conventions, like the "you" who after "Twenty years of schooling" is bleakly just "put on the day shift," or they could forge a new path, which is precisely what the song does formally ("Subterranean"). Dylan scholar Tony Attwood notes that "we really had never heard anything remotely like this before," which is partly because the song is a subconscious poem. The song's "brilliance is that it taps into a whole community's subconscious," which is similar to what Kerouac's book *The Subteranneans* did for the Beat Generation (Attwood, "Subterranean"). Then, what is the song's resolution if there is no refrain that possesses wisdom or direction like "The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind / The answer is blowin' in the wind"? (Dylan, "Blowin'"). The times have indeed changed, not only for Dylan, but socioculturally and politically as well; things are not as clear-cut as they were when the troubadour rock-poet, with acoustic guitar and harmonica perched upon its neck-holder, protested in the folky, Guthrie talking blues style.

His first studio electric rock song provides something of an answer if we look at the last (unrhyming) couplet, "The pump don't work / Cause the vandals took the handles" ("Subterranean"). At first glance, it does not seem to provide us with any resolution, because

it is seemingly nonsensical. However, when considered alongside Rimbaudian and Beat philosophy, which praises both artists *and* criminals for not seeing life as it is presented by societal conventions, the song-poem[82]—which begins with a musical gesture of the counterculture—ends by signaling that its listeners should turn to those on the fringes of society for wisdom. Vandals have stolen the pump's handles, such that they have denied others access to water or whatever necessary liquid the pump controls. Like the mocking tone in the lines, "You don't need a weatherman / To know which way the wind blows," there is a deep suspicion to organizations in general ("Subterranean"). Those who are anti-establishment—the countercultural youths like Johnny and the singer as well as the vandals—endeavor to free themselves from society, which is controlled by organizations and corporations. This concept spearheads the material on the rest of the visionary albums.

VI.

Before I leap into "Maggie's Farm," excuse a brief interlude to attend to an important item in "She Belongs to Me," the second song on *Bringing It All Back Home*, because it emphasizes Dylan's interest in prophetlike figures and includes a significant allusions to Rimbaud that casts the singer in a sub-category of visionary poetry Blake and Ginsberg do not belong in. Lyrically, the song is twelve-bar blues, but melodically, it is something entirely different, which is made evident on the airy alternate take on *No Direction Home: Bootleg Volume 7*. The song may be about Sara Lownds, the subject of "Love Minus

82 In addition to borrowing the concept of criminal as person freed from the strictures of society from Rimbaud, they also took from Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West*, which discusses the "fellaheen," a concept the Beats borrowed to refer to those outside of history and therefore free to be themselves, free to smoke marijuana, and free to listen to jazz; the fellaheen encapsulates those who had "a deep piety that fills the waking consciousness…the naïve belief…that there is some sort of mystic constitution of actuality" (Ginsberg, 405, 407; Tonkinson 12). They viewed Times Square junkie, Herbert Huncke as their first emblem of the fellaheen and Beat cowboy Neal Cassady as the next one. See the first chapter on Kerouac for more on Spengler and the Beats' reverence for the fellaheen.

Zero/No Limit," ex-girlfriend Suze Rotolo, or Joan Baez, who did indeed wear an "Egyptian ring that sparkles before she speaks" given to her by Dylan and who best exemplifies the line repeated in the first verse, "She's got everything she needs, she's an artist / She don't look back" (Dylan, "She").[83] Regardless of the identity of "She" who "never stumbles," my larger point is that at the end of the first verse, Dylan sings, "She can take the dark out of the nighttime / And paint the daytime black," which evokes a line from Rimbaud's *A Season in Hell*: "I removed from the sky the blue that is black, and I lived like a spark of gold of *pure* light" ("She"; Rimbaud, *A Season* 199). Hampton, who picks up on the same allusion, explains that "the traces of Rimbaud make certain things legible in Dylan's work that those of other poets did not"; because, unlike Ginsberg and his visionary predecessor, William Blake, for Dylan and Rimbaud, the visionary experience is not something that overtakes them entirely (Hampton, "Absolutely" 4). Instead, for the latter artists, there is a close relationship between vision and the work, and this relationship requires a "systematic technological exploration of the limits of the self" (4). While Blake and Ginsberg sought complete submergence in the visionary experience, Rimbaud and Dylan maintain a certain measure of control, such that through the process of sense derangement, they wield a certain amount of agency Hampton claims the others do not.

Further, Dylan does not claim to be capable of harnessing the powers the song's subject possesses, but he is very interested in those who do. After all, Heylin reminds us in his section on "She Belongs to Me," Dylan has always been attracted to "witchy women" (Heylin 275). Likewise, he is fascinated by and seeks to emulate visionary poets like Rimbaud who have such power and also Ginsberg, whom he refers to as holy, because the prophet-

[83] I am convinced the subject is Baez, as the final lines refer to the subject being a musician: "For Halloween give her a trumpet / And for Christmas, buy her a drum" (Dylan, "She").

poet was able to "cros[s] all the boundaries of time and usefulness" (qtd. in Heylin 272). Nevertheless, we know from a post-motorcycle accident Dylan that the characters in his songs are also all reflections of himself: "when I used words like 'he' and 'it' and 'they,' and talking about other people, I was really talking about nobody but me" (292). Perhaps Lownds, Rotolo, and/or Baez harnessed that power, but the point of significance here is that Dylan himself is the Rimbaudian visionary poet who "can take the dark out of the nighttime / And paint the daytime black" (Dylan, "She").

VII.

If "My Back Pages" from *Another Side* creates a dialectic with the past, then "Maggie's Farm" revolts against the past. This is yet another song that is in twelve-bar blues form, but "Maggie's Farm" is a protest song, and it is a protest song that has opened more of his shows than any other. Attwood explains that this fact signals that Dylan considers its content as an introduction to all other songs that follow in live performances ("Bob Dylan's 'Maggie's'"). It is likely about Silas McGee's Farm, where he played a folk show in 1963 and which he puns on in the title. However, "Maggie's Farm," run by Maggie, her cheap brother, abusive pa, and preachy ma (who is apparently the "brains behind pa") is, as I mentioned earlier, representative of the folk movement, which this re-masked visionary Dylan equates with mainstream culture (Dylan, "Maggie's"). In the last verse, he explains that on top of everything else he has endured on the farm, at the core of his discontent is forced conformity: "But everybody wants you / To be just like them / They sing while you slave and I just get bored" ("Maggie's"). Dylan realized that the folk movement was yet another oppressive system that ultimately bored him because it forced him to express himself in one

particular mode, which just does not align with the Rimbaudian endeavor to consistently be "absolutely modern."

If the central message of anti-conformity in "Maggie's Farm" aptly introduces the rest of his material in live shows, then it also appropriately introduces the remainder of *Bringing It All Back Home*, which I will separate into two musical triptychs partitioned by the acclaimed and sense-deranged "Mr. Tambourine Man" (and putting aside "Love Minus Zero/No Limit"). The first triptych is made up of "Outlaw Blues," "On the Road Again," and "Bob Dylan's 115th Dream," all of which seem to be about the same figure who has taken the advice from "Subterranean Homesick Blues" and "Maggie's Farm," as the speaker is an outlaw, non-conformist and independent. He may "look like Robert Ford," a newcomer to the James-Younger Gang,[84] who murdered the gang's leader, but he "feel[s] just like Jesse James" (Dylan, "Outlaw"). Both Ford and James were outlaws in the same gang, but it is James who remains in our national collective memory as a legendary character representing the independent spirit of the Wild West. Moreover, James has been hunted and shot by Ford; therefore, James is a quintessential Beat figure: on the one hand, he is Beat as in beatific, as we still remember him for qualities like self-reliance that our society upholds, and on the other hand, he is "beat down" because he was hunted and murdered. In addition to the Kerouacian beatific aspect of Beat, Beat as in "beat down" is another meaning of the complex word used to designate the Beat Generation, which stems from Herbert Huncke's Times Square slang that meant downtrodden and cast aside by mainstream society.[85]

[84] A group of outlaws in the nineteenth-century American frontier, which was made up of the James and Younger brothers.

[85] For a more comprehensive definition of "Beat," please refer to the first chapter on Kerouac.

Later in the song-poem, Dylan sings, "Don't ask me nothin' bout nothin' / I just might tell you the truth," and in the next song, "On the Road Again"—whose title echoes Kerouac's *On the Road*—the singer is staying with a woman at her parents' house (Dylan, "Outlaw"). She asks him continuously why he does not live there, and he averts her question every time: "Honey, why do you have to ask," "Honey, how come you have to ask me that," "Honey, I gotta think you're really weird," "Honey, I can't believe that you're for real," and lastly, "Honey, how come you don't move" ("On the"). He avoids her questions as to why he does not move in because he "just might tell [her] the truth," which we know from the rest of "On the Road Again" is that her home is filled with strange, circus-like characters, such as the woman's father who wears "A Napoleon Bonaparte mask," grandpa who has a cane that "turns into a sword," grandma who "prays to pictures / That are pasted on a board," and even the butler who "has something to prove" ("Outlaw"; "On the"). In short, this woman's home, where there are "fistfights in the kitchen" and where the members of the household still believe in the Santa Claus myth, is a metaphor for mainstream society ("On the").

The outlaw ultimately moves away from the insidious mainstream society—as symbolized by the woman's home—to a surrealistic landscape he far prefers in "Bob Dylan's 115th Dream": a Melvillean dreamscape. The song opens with the outlaw on the Mayflower and ends with the outlaw, now a "hobo sailor,"[86] gazing upon three ships led by Columbus, to whom he bids "good luck" ("Bob"). Upon the Mayflower with our outlaw-hobo sailor—who at one point refers to himself as Captain Kidd—is Captain Arab and his crew of harpooners, a group he would rather live amongst than those in the woman's household in

[86] In addition to criminals, cowboys, and other independent outliers of society, the Beats also held hobos in high esteem.

"On the Road Again" (Dylan, "Bob"). Captain Arab puns on Captain Ahab from Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*.[87] After being jailed "for carrying harpoons," the hobo sailor is freed, though without Captain Arab and the rest of the crew, for whom he commences to seek bail ("Bob"). He asks for directions from a Guernsey cow who leads him towards a restaurant where rendered, boiling fat creates an explosion in the kitchen—another allusion to *Moby-Dick*—and subsequent ruckus in the restaurant ("Bob"). After an even more bizarre series of events including a French woman, a British taxi driver, and being rebuffed from a patriot's house, he assigns his fate to the flipping of a coin, which alludes to the plentiful coin imagery in *Moby-Dick*, specifically the section on the golden Doubloon. The coin lands on tails, and solely because "tails" rhymes with "sails," he decides to go back to the ship, which has a parking ticket on its mast ("Bob"). Like Captain Ahab, Captain Arab is last heard of "stuck on a whale," except, unlike Ahab's adversary Moby Dick who is lost after destroying the Pequod,[88] the whale in this song-poem "was married to the deputy / Sherriff of the jail" ("Bob"). The closing image features outlaw-hobo sailor Captain Kidd passing by Columbus who goes off in his "three ships a-sailin'," presumably to discover America, which loops us back to the beginning of the song ("Bob").

Attwood calls the entire triptych and especially its concluding "Bob Dylan's 115th Dream" a "post-modernist musical manifesto," because the "descent into increasing

[87] Dylan has been obsessed with mythmaking since the onset of his career—as evidenced by his myriad masks—and he has looked to Melville as a quintessential American mythmaker. Melville is one of few writers he references in his 2016 Nobel lecture: "If a song moves you, that's all the important. I don't have to know what a song means. I've written all kinds of things into my songs. And I'm not going to worry about it – what it all means. When Melville put all his old testament, biblical references, scientific theories, Protestant doctrines, and all that knowledge of the sea and sailing ships and whales into one story, I don't think he would have worried about it either – what it all means" (Dylan, "Nobel"). Though, it is likely to assume Melville did indeed know "what it all means."

[88] Captain Ahab's ship in *Moby-Dick*.

madness or silliness" is also an "ascent into increasing surrealism and fun" (Dylan, "Outlaw"). The outlaw turned hobo sailor exchanges a head-of-house in a Napoleon mask for Captain Arab; he prefers the surrealist Melvillean landscape over the woman's house in "On the Road Again," as he privileges escapism over mainstream society. The silliness and madness Attwood attributes to a postmodernist musical manifesto—which uses Beat-like comic absurdity—subverts the content typical to popular song and also formally subverts the rhythm and blues form. Unlike "Love Minus Zero," which centers around the concreteness of a woman's beauty, "Bob Dylan's 115th Dream" is highly surreal. Its meaning picks up on the notion from "Subterranean Homesick Blues" that the political and sociocultural landscape is so chaotic that not even the rhythm and blues form works anymore: "Now everything is breaking down, nothing is certain, the dream and reality mix" (Attwood, "Outlaw"). While I agree with Attwood's analysis, I think he is missing the fact that the outlaw figure—which, again, is lionized by Rimbaud and the Beats—finds solace in a surrealistic dreamscape whose only real-world references are foundational American myths: The Mayflower,[89] Columbus, and *Moby-Dick*, which, albeit literary in nature, contains heightened mythological themes both within the story-world and in collective American consciousness. The audience is only able to make some sense of the meaning of "Bob Dylan's 115th Dream" because of these allusions. The fact that the surrealistic dreamscape the outlaw-hobo sailor prefers is populated with mythological and literary allusions functions as commentary on the chaotic nature of mid-1960's reality, where people must turn to art for meaning-making, for truth.

[89] The Mayflower image evokes a theme that begins in Dylan's 1960's visionary period and which he resuscitated during the Rolling Thunder Revue in 1975-76. Ginsberg explains that Dylan's descent/ascent into surrealism is metaphorical for his work as a pilgrim discovering a nation of poetry (qtd. in *Rolling Thunder*).

VIII.

In the next song, rather than search for any truth, the singer yearns to find and be cast under the "dancing spell" of Mr. Tambourine Man, a Pied-Piper-like character who haunts the song but who never actually makes an appearance. The singer appears to desire to be unstuck from time by entering a transcendental space as suggested by the line "Let me forget about today until tomorrow," among others. (Dylan, "Mr."). Some interpret the song-poem as a portrayal of a long night under the influence of some sort of hallucinogen like lysergic acid (LSD). Heylin, however, clarifies that Dylan had only experimented with marijuana by the time the song-poem was composed and would not actually try LSD until several months after its composition (223). Suze Rotolo claims that the song was written about a night Dylan was "wandering the streets" after they quarreled (qtd. in Heylin 222). Regardless as to whether her account is accurate, "Mr. Tambourine Man" is likely about multi-instrumentalist Bruce Langhorne who played the guitar on the studio version and who was known around Greenwich Village for carrying a massive tambourine—"as big as a wagon wheel"—which explains the "jingle-jangle morning" image (Dylan qtd. in Heylin 221; Dylan, "Mr."). The significant connection for me is that the song-poem expresses a commitment to Rimbaud's advice to derange the senses, which the singer enacts loyally in song's composition, as he records, "my senses have been stripped" ("Mr.").

The Tambourine Man is absent throughout the entire song-poem. If we consider Rimbaud's "Genie" intertextually with Dylan's song, Rimbaud's explanation of his subject helps to elucidate why the singer desires for the mystical figure "To take [him] disappearin' through the smoke rings of [his] mind." Rimbaud explains, "He is love, perfect and reinvented measure, miraculous, unforeseen reason, and eternity: machine loved for its

qualities of fate" (Rimbaud, "Genie" 255). Like the weary subjects in "Genie," the singer's "weariness amazes [him]," and what they desire is escape in nature not unlike "Bob Dylan's 115th Dream" (Dylan, "Mr."). For Rimbaud, the Genie is "affection," "the present moment," "enchantment," and the "future" the spectators "see pass by in the sky of storms and the flight of ecstasy" (Rimbaud, "Genie" 255). In Dylan's version, the singer fancies for the Tambourine Man to "Take me on a trip upon your magic swirlin' ship," because he is "ready to go anywhere, I'm ready for to fade / Into my own parade, cast your dancing spell my way / I promise to go under it" (Dylan, "Mr."). The Genie and Mr. Tambourine Man are both immortal, enchanting beings who originate in human visions. Moreover, the Genie and Mr. Tambourine Man are both tied to a seaside storm, which in each case implies that they are transcendental and perhaps even supernatural entities with a profound connection to Nature. In both cases, the mystical figure is sought after by adoring humans.

Furthermore, and perhaps most significantly, form and content merge in both "Genie" and "Mr. Tambourine Man," as reading Rimbaud's poem and listening to Dylan's song generates a similar hypnotic experience the weary bystanders in each work seek. "Genie" is filled with overlapping descriptive phrases about the Genie:

> He is affection and the present moment because he has thrown open the house to the snow foam of winter and to the noises of summer, he who purified drinking water and food, who is the enchantment of fleeing places and the superhuman delight of resting places. He is affection and future, the strength and love which we, erect in rage and boredom, see pass by in the sky of storms and the flags of ecstasy. (Rimbaud, "Genie" 255)

Upon reading the poem aloud, in the translated English *or* the original French,[90] the image of the Genie begins to materialize as more descriptors pile on one another. The reader exhales

[90] "Il es l'affection et le present puisqu'il a fait la maison ouverte à l'hiver écumeux et à rumeur de l'été, lui qui a purifié les boissons et les ailments, lui qui est le charme des lieux fuyants et le délive surhumain des stations. Il

more than s/he inhales, such that there is a slight dizzying effect, such that, as the reader comes closer to understanding the mystical figure, they experience a hypnotic effect brought on by the poem's form. Additionally, the middle of the poem is punctuated with a series of emphatic statements, such as, "Fertility of the mind and vastness of the world! / His body! the dreamed-of liberation, the collapse of grace joined with new violence! / All that he sees! all the ancient kneelings and the penalties canceled as he passes by" (Rimbaud, "Genie" 255).[91] The effect on the reader is not unlike a Jewish prayer—or Ginsberg's 1950's "Hebraic-Melvillean bardic breath" and later philosophical connection between poetic breath and meditation, as expounded upon in the previous chapter—which is intended to cause a dizzying, breath-induced hypnotism as the reader extolls the Divine. Hampton explains the effect in "Mr. Tambourine Man" quite similarly: "Th[e] sequence of brief lines—rhyming with each other…and varying in numbers according to the verse—is what generates the dreamlike or hypnotic experience of the song ("Absolutely" 10). The following verse encapsulates Hampton's explanation:

> Though you might hear laughin', spinnin,' swingin' madly across the sun
> It's not aimed at anyone, it's just escapin' on the run
> And for the sky there are no fences facin'
> And if you hear vague traces of skippin' reels of rhyme
> To your tambourine in time, it's just a ragged clown behind
> I wouldn't pay it any mind
> It's just a shadow you're seein' that he's chasing. (Dylan, "Mr.")

The "-in'" sounds of the gerunds along with the "s" and "f" sounds all stack upon one another to generate a dizzying onwards trajectory, which is heightened by the "i" and "ee"

est l'affection et l'avenir, la force et l'amour que nous, debout dans les rages et les ennuis, nous voyons passer dans le ciel de tempête et es drapeaux d'extase" (Rimbaud, "Genie" 254).

91 "O fécondité de l'esprit et immensité de l'univers! / Son corps! le dégagement rêvé, le brisement de la grâce croisée de violence nouvelle! / Sa vue, sa vue! tous les agenouillages anciens et les peines *relvés* à sa suite" (254).

sounds in the last three lines that ultimately ends with two more gerunds. Taken together this composition causes a hypnotic looping effect. As ever, form and content merge, as the formal hypnotism matches the singer's escapist desire to be cast under the Tambourine Man's dancing spell, which is ultimately a Rimbaudian dive into his own psyche: "Take me disappearin' through the smoke rings of my mind / Down the foggy ruins of time, far past the frozen leaves…" (Dylan, "Mr."). The hypnotic effect is also similar to that in Rimbaud's "The Drunken Boat," whose title, I suspect, inspired Dylan's "magic swirlin' ship" "The Drunken Boat" is a poem which is itself a dizzying catalogue of events that sets the reader afloat in an imaginative space just like "Mr. Tambourine Man" does for the singer *and* the listener.

In the last verse of Dylan's song, the singer reaches the state he has yearned for throughout the song-poem:

> The haunted, frightened trees, out to the windy beach
> Far from the twisted reach of crazy sorrow
> Yes, to dance beneath the diamond sky with one hand waving free
> Silhouetted by the sea, circled by the circus sands
> With all memory and fate driven deep beneath the waves
> Let me forget about today until tomorrow ("Mr.")

The Rimbaudian process of a deep dive into the singer's psyche the Mr. Tambourine Man supposedly leads him to is a transcendental space seemingly marked by freedom from human worries. To me, it sounds as if the singer has reached transcendence, which I connect to Cousin's spontaneous reason or Ginsberg's Supreme Reality. Interestingly, this verse contains curious literary allusions to other visionary works. Additionally, Nelson Hilton claims that "the haunting, frightening trees" refers to the trees in Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, which Dylan undoubtedly read considering his friendship to Ginsberg, a well-known Blake devotee (110). Dylan has tapped into this visionary, transcendental mode

thanks to Mr. Tambourine Man; he is surrounded by Blakean trees and "circled by circus sands," where he yearns to "forget about today until tomorrow" (Dylan, "Mr."). The content in these lines is hypnotic in itself, as Hampton explains, "by gesturing toward narrative time while eliding the actual temporal development that would yoke it to some larger social vision" (Hampton, "Absolutely" 11). The listener reaches the end of the song, but the escapes time entirely, as "all memory and fate" have "driven deep beneath the waves," and he seeks to "forget about today." Then, as the listener contemplates where and when the singer may be, the chorus is repeated: "…In the jingle jangle morning I'll come followin' you" (Dylan, "Mr."). As the harmonica sounds close out the song, the listener is left wondering who Mr. Tambourine is, what his mystical powers are, and what becomes of the singer who is last seen on the shores unstuck from time. The narrative play with time here moves beyond that in "My Back Pages" and "Chimes of Freedom" (Hampton, "Absolutely" 11). "Mr. Tambourine Man" is, therefore, a prime exemplifier of vision music, and an appropriate introduction to the final triptych of the album.

IX.

We meet those same "haunted, frightening trees" in "Gates of Eden" when, in the first verse, the riding cowboy angel lights his occult-like candle whose "glow is waxed in black / All except when 'neath the trees of Eden" (Dylan, "Mr."; Ricks 144; Dylan, "Gates"). "Gates of Eden" is considered one of Dylan's most surreal songs: the cowboy angel is a Beat-like beatific avatar for the singer, who, along with others, searches for Eden, a dark paradise that yokes oppositional forces of good and evil in the Blakean vein.[92] Instead

[92] In *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1790), Blake responds to Emanuel Swedenborg's *Heaven and Hell* (1758). In Swedenborg's version, he spiritually explains Heaven and Hell by complicating the view in the Christian Bible of angels and devils, among other characters. One of his central themes is that getting to Heaven is simply a result of loving God, whereas Hell is a place for love of self. In Blake's version, he complicates the

of unpacking the meaning behind the swirling, rhapsodic verses that only approach Eden rather than ever being subsumed by the paradisiacal, I focus on the surrealistic mode Dylan engages in. Curiously, the second triptych, which begins with "Gates of Eden," is resolutely acoustic, which must have come as a surprise to listeners turning the otherwise electric album onto its second side for the first time.[93] The rhetorical purpose behind Dylan's return to the acoustic sound is revolutionary when we consider the hallucinatory effect of his lyrics. His acoustic songs on *Another Side of Bob Dylan* are far different than what we are presented with here in this triptych. As stated, "Chimes of Freedom" comes close to what he achieves on *Bringing It All Back Home*, but still, it is not as abstract or hallucinatory. In 1964, he was merely experimenting with the visionary mode, but in 1965, his characteristically acoustic sound has the bravado of a visionary poet who modernized his craft.

In her lecture at the inaugural World of Bob Dylan Symposium hosted by the University of Tulsa's Institute for Bob Dylan Studies (in partnership with the Bob Dylan Center), Sarah Gates carefully interpreted "The Gates of Eden" in her presentation entitled "The Truth Just Twists." With a guitar slung over her shoulder, which she used to perform some examples of how "The Gates of Eden" is set in Dorian mode,[94] she elucidated that

dichotomous thinking of good versus evil that Swedenborg's version still dependent upon, because in Blake's spiritual worldview, 1) every person contains both good and evil, and 2) Hell is a place for freedom to creatively express oneself.

93 The album's second side begins with "Mr. Tambourine Man," whose music is made up of a lead acoustic guitar, a backing electric guitar that serves to inflect the former, and Dylan's famous harmonica. While not entirely acoustic, it does not contain a full band that makes the electric aspect overt as in songs like "Subterranean Homesick Blues," "Maggie's Farm," and "Outlaw Blues." Therefore, "Mr. Tambourine Man" is musically more similar to the songs of the final triptych.

94 A scale that falls between major and minor keys that elicits feelings of uncanniness, as Gates describes the Dorian mode is the "*unheimlich* home of the song world," wherein "*unheimlich*" signals to Sigmund Freud's essay "The Uncanny." By using musical theory, Gates explained that the song involves "uncanny sonorities of the song world," wherein the last line of each verse and the penultimate lines that approach Eden are "more hopeful and bright" (Gates).

"Gates of Eden" is an "opaque" song whose key characteristic is "psychedelic irony." This is her term for an uncanny, aesthetic mode that generates a hallucinogenic effect, because, 1) listening to Dylan's lyrics has mind-expanding effects, and 2) his lyrics contain ironic twists that both resist and invite interpretation. Take, for example, the following verse,

> With a time-rusted compass blade
> Aladdin and his lamp
> Sits with Utopian hermit monks
> Sidesaddle on the Golden Calf
> And on their promises of paradise
> You will not hear a laugh
> All except inside the Gates of Eden. (Dylan, "Gates).

The psychedelic aspect here is the image of Aladdin and "Utopian hermit monks" sitting together sidesaddle on the archetypal false idol, as they point the way with their "time-rusted compass blade." The ironic component is the fact that a "time-rusted compass blade" cannot possibly point to anything, and, as the singer tells us clearly, "You will not hear a laugh / All except inside the Gates of Eden." Throughout "Gates of Eden," Dylan uses psychedelic irony, but instead of the psychedelic effect as signaling the angelic, Dylan's Eden is Blakean, as it ironically yokes good and evil. When the cowboy angel longingly gazes towards Eden, other events unfold which are contained in a "ghastly world of absurdity, neglect, decadence, and torment" (Gates). Gates' term "psychedelic irony" is therefore useful to express an aspect of Dylan's visionary poetics that is employed in "Gates of Eden," and even in later songs off other visionary albums, such as "Visions of Johanna" from *Blonde on Blonde*. Significantly, even though the ironic is an offshoot of the comedic, his use of irony here starkly opposes the comedic tone in the songs of the first triptych. While I will soon revisit the ironic in my discussion of "It's Alright Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)," I am more

concerned with the psychedelic aspect here, which we saw elsewhere on *Bringing It All Back Home*, but which is fully actualized in the final three *acoustic* songs.

By "psychedelic," Gates clarifies that she does not mean to suggest that Dylan wrote these songs while tripping or that he is drawing from memories of trips, because she does not care about the chemical influence. Instead, she uses the word "psychedelic" to describe the aesthetic by which Dylan's "lyrics unspool images, figures, and scenes," which generate a "mind-expanding, *anima-mundi*-manifesting" effect like that produced by psychedelics (Gates). *Anima Mundi* is a term whose etymology refers back to the Greek and Latin notion of "the soul of the world," or, "the animating principle, a power or spirit supposed by early philosophers to be present throughout the material universe, organizing and giving form to the whole and to all its parts, and regulating change and movement" ("Anima"). *Anima Mundi*—the term for the entity that contains all other living entities—is therefore synonymous with Cousin's spontaneous reason and Ginsberg's Supreme Reality, and what many likely recognize as "universal consciousness" ("Anima"). For example, Ginsberg, who actively aimed his poetry at producing a transcendental experience, was especially taken with the following verse,

> The motorcycle black madonna
> Two-wheeled gypsy queen
> And her silver-studded phantom cause
> The gray flannel dwarf to scream
> As he weeps to wicked birds of prey
> Who pick up on his bread crumb sins
> And there are no sins inside the Gates of Eden. (Dylan, "Gates")

While I once heard someone interpret the "gray flannel dwarf" as Dylan himself and "The motorcycle black Madonna / Two-wheeled gypsy queen" as Baez, the point here is not strictly biographical. Just like the dwarf's "bread crumb sins"—which undoubtedly refers to

the Jewish custom of *Tashlich*[95]—are being picked up by the "wicked birds of prey," so does the listener pick up breadcrumbs of meaning. Nonetheless, as I stated earlier, my intent is not to unpack meaning, which is an exercise worthy of an entire article in itself, but instead to emphasize how psychedelic his imagery is. In "Mr. Tambourine Man," the listener is brought to a hypnotic state the singer himself yearns for, and here we are presented with "dazzling expressionist poetry" that bears the hallmarks of the psychedelia permeating the counterculture at the time (Rogovoy 117-118). The psychedelic descriptive lines such as, "The motorcycle black madonna / Two-wheeled gypsy queen" and those about Aladdin, the monks, and the Golden Calf ask the listener to experience the mind-expanding effect rather than parse through the myriad possible meanings and biographical allusions (Dylan, "Gates").

Ultimately, the song's final verse depicts the singer's lover coming to him with her dreams. It is implied that she seeks his help to interpret her dreams, to which he explains, "At times I think there are no words / But these to tell what's true / And there are no truths outside the Gates of Eden" ("Gates"). In a rhetorical move akin to John Keats' negative capability,[96] Dylan leaves his audience wondering whether or not the song is a catalogue of her dream-content or the singer's interpretive answer; but to sit in wonder is moot, because "there are no truths outside the Gates of Eden," a sentiment that is conveyed in the first line, "…the truth just twists" ("Gates"). To make meaning of the song is a dizzying experience, which itself parallels the psychedelic effect. The fact that the song is acoustic is

[95] A ritual performance of throwing breadcrumbs symbolic for a year's worth of sins into a flowing body of water during the afternoon of *Rosh Ha'Shanah*, the Jewish New Year.

[96] For English Romantic poet Keats, great writers (like William Shakespeare) use negative capability, a poetic device that pursues beauty and simultaneously leads the audience towards uncertainty and confusion.

immensely ironic and increases the shock factor on this otherwise electric album. Whereas on the previous eight songs Dylan uses hallucinatory abstraction on electric songs, now he returns to the acoustic trading psychedelic irony for folk conventions used on his previous acoustic songs. In the first eight songs, Dylan is like Rimbaud in "The Drunken Boat," in which he boasts of the experience of "the initial thrill of liberation from all connection to the past" (Hampton, "Absolutely" 7). But then, keeping with the Rimbaudian aspiration to continuously be "absolutely modern," Dylan returns to the acoustic as a fully-fledged visionary poet, whose psychedelic lyricism has a "mind-expanding, *anima-mundi*-manifesting" effect (Gates).

X.

The psychedelic surrealist landscape takes a dark turn in "It's Alright Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)," whose darkness swells beyond those Blakean "haunted, frightening trees" (Dylan, "Gates"). I agree with Heylin's assessment that "It's Alright Ma" has a "different kind of penetrating magic," as we seemingly have more access than ever before to Dylan's "thought-dreams," though, only partially because he feels as "if [his] thought-dreams could be seen" entirely, "They'd probably put [his] head in a guillotine" ("It's Alright"). Here, the "they" signifies the body of people who warned the countercultural youths in "Subterranean Homesick Blues," "look out kid." The tone in "It's Alright Ma" denotes a far more sinister "they" than the folk establishment in "Maggie's Farm," because the "they" here is the system that causes the folk establishment to crave conformity and to abide by strict, preconceived conventions. The woman's family in "On the Road Again" is a circus-like, microcosmic caricature of this "they"; however, that family is more like the girl's parents in Elvis' "That's All Right Mama," a quintessential 1950's song about a teenage girl's oppressive parents that

Dylan borrows from yet revamps for the 1960's postmodern bleakness. The "they" in "It's Alright Ma" possesses an insidious nature like the subject of the Military Industrial Complex in Dylan's "Masters of War" (1963), for whom "Even Jesus would never / Forgive what you do." Whereas in "Masters of War" he sings to "you," which connotes the Military Industrial Complex, here, they subject is a more amorphous "they," which suggests the larger sociocultural system. Ominously, the power of the perpetrators in the catalogue of darkness that is "It's Alright Ma" expands beyond politics. "They" is the system, or more colloquially, 'the Man.'

Therefore, the stakes are higher here than in previous songs on *Bringing It All Back Home*, because while "It's Alright Ma" elicits that same hypnotic and psychedelic effect as in "Mr. Tambourine Man" and "Gates of Eden," close attention to the seemingly surreal landscape reveals that it is reality Dylan sings about. By engaging in Rimbaudian procedure in the psyche, his result is not unlike Ginsberg's, which protests against mainstream society, albeit in a far different manner than folk music's overt protest. His opening lines clarify this point:

> Darkness at the break of noon
> Shadows even the silver spoon
> The handmade blade, the child's balloon
> Eclipses both the sun and moon
> To understand you know to soon
> There is no sense in trying. (Dylan, "It's Alright")

The "break of noon" signifies either the mid-1960s or, more generally, the mid-twentieth century. This was a time in which darkness penetrates every aspect of life—even "Eclips[ing] both the sun and moon"—such that not even the wealthy with their silver spoon are spared. Then, as if the singer who sits "on the pavement / Thinking about the government" in "Subterranean Homesick Blues" finally articulates his response to society around him, in

"It's Alright Ma," he resolutely asserts, "There is no sense in trying." This stance singlehandedly proves that Dylan disconnected from his folk protest past; donning a new visionary mask, yet, equipped with the same acoustic guitar, he boldly declares, "There is no sense in trying," because folk-like protest is moot in a world where "not much is really sacred," in a world that is not fixed (Dylan, "It's Alright"). However, as in "Subterranean Homesick Blues" and other songs on *Bringing It All Back Home*, "It's Alright Ma" still protests, albeit in a very different way than his previous folk protest songs.

The song announces its use of the ironic in its title that is echoed throughout the song, where he vividly describes a reality the counterculture sees as the borderlands between destruction and rebirth, because "he not busy born is busy dying" (Dylan, "It's Alright"). This dark world he depicts seems like an Orwellian dystopia,

> Disillusioned words like bullets bark
> As human gods aim for their mark
> Make everything from toy guns that spark
> To flesh-colored Christs that glow in the dark
> It's easy to see without looking too far
> That not much is really sacred. ("It's Alright")

Dylan performs verses like this one in an almost spoken-word fashion reminiscent of Guthrie's talking blues, all while his descending baseline generates what Christine Hand Jones referred to in her lecture at the World of Bob Dylan Symposium as a catatonic-like state, "carrying the listener downward into purgatorial modernity." This descent is psychedelic in nature. He calls out oppressive power structures like Capitalism who "Make everything from toy guns that spark / To flesh-colored Christs that glow in the dark," and which spawned the conning media, which controls even the way we think:

> Advertising signs they con
> You into thinking you're the one
> That can do what's never been done

That can win what's never been won
Meantime life outside goes on
All around you. (Dylan, "It's Alright")

Evidently, the folk movement does not work because it functions *within* this confidence game, where any conventional protest is, as I said earlier, totally moot because "the rules of the road have been lodged / It's only people's games that you got to dodge" ("It's Alright"). However, he is not defeated—"And it's alright, Ma, I can make it"—because he has removed himself from mainstream society, where the folk music protests from within ("It's Alright").

The key here is psychedelic irony, which binds form to content, because the answer is indeed psychedelic in nature. Mind-expansion is the answer to combatting this otherwise irresistible darkness. If at this point "the rules of the road have been lodged" and "It's only people's games you that you got to dodge," then independent thought, rather than folk-like protest from within, is the solution. I would be remiss not to conclude that a mid-1960's Dylan, who was good friends with Ginsberg and other Beats like McClure, may be suggesting the use of mind-expanding drugs to help his listeners access independent thought. After all, we know Dylan was using marijuana—which, while not hallucinogenic does indeed promote mind-expansion—and this is around the time he started to experiment with psychedelics like LSD, which makes sense considering his fraternity with Ginsberg and other Beats like McClure.[97] Instead of protesting in the clear and conventional way, "It's Alright Ma" merges the surreal with permeated with protest gestures to suggest independent thought, which is promoted by psychedelic mind-expansion. Conventional protest does not

[97] Ginsberg and McClure both experimented with psychedelics for personal enlightenment and for the purposes of poetic process, as in Ginsberg's "Wales Visitation, "Lysergic Acid," and "Laughing Gas" and McClure's "Peyote Poem."

work anymore, because, at this point in his career, if he were transparent with his anti-establishmentarian thoughts and his fervent support of illicit drug use, "They'd probably put my head in a guillotine" (Dylan, "It's Alright"). The sociocultural and political landscape is too complicated now for conventional protest to do anything but have the protester jailed (or worse), "But it's alright, Ma, it's life and life only," the singer explains in his last line, which does not signal him giving up but instead fighting the status quo with something other than protest: independent thought ("It's Alright").

The use of psychedelic effects bolsters the implicit suggestion towards independent thought induced by using psychedelic drugs and/or listening to songs such as these. From the onset of *Bringing It All Back Home*—an album aptly titled considering its final triptych that revisits the acoustic, but now with visionary poetics—with that first image of Johnny "in the basement / Mixing up the medicine" and the singer "on the pavement / Thinking about the government" set to electric music, we know that Dylan breaks from his folk protest past but *still* protests, albeit unconventionally ("Subterranean"). A significant aspect of Dylan's visionary period, which abides by the Rimbaudian pledge to continuously be "absolutely modern," is his loyal enactment of the "*derangement* of *all the senses*"; psychedelic writing itself deranges the senses, both the singer's and the listeners'.

While Dylan was thinking about Rimbaud and his visionary poetic mode since he created his first mask of Bob Dylan, folk protest rocker, it was his fraternity with the Beats and especially Ginsberg that provided the impetus to a fully realized visionary mask. As John Tytell explains in his article "The Beat Generation and the Continuing American Revolution," "Dylan remarked that Ginsberg's poetry was for him the first sign of a new consciousness, of an awareness of regenerative possibilities of America" (64). Pivoting to a

"new consciousness" and having faith in the "regenerative possibilities of America" is the central message of "It's Alright Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)." His new consciousness is essential in the changing sociocultural and political landscape of the mid-1960s. As he sings to his former folk self in the album's final song, "It's All Over Now, Baby Blue," "The sky, too, is folding under you / And it's all over now, Baby Blue." In short, *Bringing it All Back Home* is an enactment of the re-masked Dylan advising his former self, "Baby Blue," to "Strike another match, go start anew," which he does on *Highway 61 Revisited* and *Blonde on Blonde* (Dylan, "It's All").

"Strike Another Match, Go Start Anew": Bob Dylan's Visionary Period, Side Two

I.

"It's All Over Now, Baby Blue" is Dylan's farewell to the folk movement and the folk rock conventions he employed in the early 1960s, which were anachronistic in the ever-transforming sociocultural and political landscape of the mid-1960s. Dylan counsels himself, "Leave your stepping stones behind, something calls for you," and this "something" is rock, not folk rock, but visionary rock that engages in free-association like Beat poetry. "Strike another match, go start anew" captures the sentiment of his next two albums, *Highway 61 Revisited* (1965) and *Blonde on Blonde* (1966), which not only continue what he started on *Bringing It All Back Home* (1965) but are widely considered his most complete albums in terms of sonic identity (Burnell, "Part 4"). Throughout *Bringing It All Back Home*, he constructs a new visionary mod rocker identity that is fully realized in *Highway 61 Revisited* and *Blonde on Blonde*. This identity was so new—so "absolutely modern"—that the "remarkable artistic path that Dylan carved for himself" also functioned as a model for rock stars globally (Slate). As with everything new, there is a certain degree of discomfort for and disdain from others involved. In 1965, when Dylan plugged in, an electric shock wave reverberated through his fanbase and through the folk community at large. His reply to heckles, boos, and audience members shouting "Judas!" was an unyielding "Play it fucking loud," a response that is emblematic of his steadfast dedication to Beat visionary poetics, which is founded on Arthur

Rimbaud's poetics and a dedication to the lineage of Romanticism that deploys spontaneity as a weapon of protest.

Bringing It All Back Home is his farewell gesture that drips with contempt at folk conventions and continues his sociopolitical protest, now shrouded in visionary poetics. What follows, *Highway 61 Revisited* and *Blonde on Blonde* are the byproducts of his forging a new path, a new genre, and a new image in the music world: Dylan as rock star. Paved on the road towards this new identity is the soul of rock 'n' roll's blues roots, denoted by the use of Highway 61—the blues highway—as a central image, a road that connects his hometown in Minnesota to fundamental cities in the history of the blues, such as St. Louis, Memphis, and New Orleans. Both albums nod to the past as they push the genre forward, helping rock 'n' roll become rock. Dylan as visionary rocker is indeed like a rolling stone that gathers sediment and moss which change its form as it rolls. And, of course that image derives from Muddy Waters' "Rollin' Stone" (1950), his own interpretation of the 1920's Delta blues classic "Catfish Blues." In Waters' song, he adds to the original verses, and in one addition where the song's title originates, he resuscitates the archetypal biblical story of a pregnant woman who prophesizes her unborn child's importance, not unlike Samuel's mother Hannah. In his version, Waters recalls a prenatal moment when his mother announces to her baby's father, "'I got a boy child's comin' / Gonna be, he gonna be a rollin' stone" (Waters). Ever a rolling stone, Waters sings this rendition of a Delta blues song with an electric guitar, signaling the new age of music. His song ends with three repetitions of, "Back down the road I'm goin'" and then a final "Sure 'nough back, sure 'nough back" (Waters). These last few lines spotlight an essential aspect of American art: the road. The road connotes freedom, as it connects the traveler to the endless democratic vistas and the

historic landscape before them. Like Waters, Dylan travels "Back down the road" far past the folk revival movement and instead to one of the most fundamentally American artforms, the blues. And, like a rolling stone traveling down this liberating road, Dylan references and reinvents the blues while paving a new path for rock.

II.

"Where do I begin…on the heels of Rimbaud moving like a dancing bullet thru the secret streets of a hot New Jersey night filled with venom and wonder…," Bob Dylan writes on the liner notes of *Desire*, his 1976 studio album, signaling a circular, eternal return to Rimbaudian visionary poetics. *Desire* and its preceding album *Blood on the Tracks* (1975) both contain resemblances of a 1965-1966 Dylan who engages in the visionary poetic mode,[98] especially in songs such as "Tangled Up in Blue," made up of a series of vignettes in which the singer continuously rediscovers the woman he loves; "Lily, Rosemary, and the Jack of Hearts," which Dylan scholar Tony Attwood says is a "shimmering half representation of life, just like Visions [of Johanna]"; "Shelter from the Storm," a poetic song that creates its own mythopoeia not unlike that by William Blake; "Isis," a mysterious song that seems to be located in either a past or futuristic Egypt that is iced over; and "One More Cup of Coffee," about a "Mysterious and dark" French gypsy who travels "To the valley below" (Attwood, "Lily"; Dylan, "One"). These albums were released while Dylan was on the Rolling Thunder Revue, which I refer to in the previous chapter as his carnival-like tour featuring performances by other artists, such as Allen Ginsberg, Joan Baez, and even Joni Mitchell,

[98] I am only including the studio albums here and am overlooking *The Basement Tapes*, which was released in 1975 between *Blood on the Tracks* and *Desire*. I disregard it in this discussion because it is composed of material from various recording sessions with The Band in the late 1960s from their house, the Big Pink and other Woodstock, New York homes. That music represents a post-motorcycle accident Dylan who was still creating prolifically, but who was trying on new masks, which is evidenced by his contemporaneous studio albums *John Wesley Harding* (1967) and *Nashville Skyline* (1969). I am also overlooking *Hard Rain* (1976), which is a compilation of live recordings of previously released songs.

albeit briefly. While Dylan has always presented himself behind figurative masks, or self-consciously fabricated personas, throughout the Rolling Thunder Revue, he wore literal masks in the form of whiteface or translucent, wax-like masks.

Undoubtedly, Dylan's visionary period—from *Bringing It All Back Home* to *Highway 61 Revisited* and *Blonde on Blonde*—stems from his allegiance to Rimbaud's visionary poetic mode, which was emboldened by his fraternity with Beat poets who considered Rimbaud's poetry as representative of the sort of work they sought to produce. The first formulation of the Beat Movement at Columbia University in the 1940s used Rimbaud's visionary poetics as a springboard for their own poetic manifesto, the New Vision, which was a reworking and restating of Rimbaud's conviction that a visionary poet is an artist who looks at their surroundings and then turns away to focus on the interior (Fowlie 57). The product of visionary poetics is, therefore, personal art that informs the public. Since Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, and Lucien Carr's inception of the New Vision and the howling poet's own series of visionary experiences shortly thereafter, Ginsberg pulled from the interior both for poetic inspiration and to comment on his exterior world. By 1963 when Ginsberg and Dylan met, Ginsberg was versed and immersed in the visionary mode, but "Dylan now had to *make himself* into a visionary; he had to develop a new poetic vocabulary and link it to the limited formal capacities of the popular song" (Hampton, "Absolutely" 2). In the previous chapter, I discuss the connection between the Rimbaudian visionary poetic mode and Dylan's shift from folk rocker to visionary mod rocker, which was spurred on by his fraternity with Ginsberg. I demonstrate how Dylan actualized his self-study and subsequent self-fashioning into a visionary lyricist, which manifests in some early experimentations with the visionary mode on *Another Side of Bob Dylan* (1964). I discuss how he began to "develop a new poetic

vocabulary link[ed] to the limited formal capacities of the popular song" on *Bringing It All Back Home* by dedicatedly studying "the procedures and limitations of the visionary mode" Rimbaud codifies in his letters and poems (Hampton, "Absolutely" 2).

By definition, "visionary" is similar to the concept of prophet-poet mentioned earlier: "Able or accustomed to see visions; capable of receiving impressions, or obtaining knowledge, by means of visions" ("Visionary"). The earliest use of the word in this sense occurs in Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* (1651). He uses the descriptor "visionary" for the Hebrew Bible's prophets: "visionary prophets" ("Visionary"). As I have stated elsewhere, one kind of prophecy in the Hebrew Bible does not signify the foretelling of the future, rather, prophecy in this sense is "a truth-teller to and an administer of his people: literally, a 'proclaimer'…social critics—the original protest singer…[who] pointed out the hypocrisies and errors of their subjects' ways" (Rogovoy 8-9). This sort of Hebrew Bible prophet engaged in sociocultural criticism and suggested paths toward collective redemption by way of their own personal mystical experiences (9). This process sounds very similar to Rimbaudian visionary poetics (although Rimbaud's product is far different from that of the biblical prophets' story worlds where they work directly on behalf of the Divine). Dylan's visionary work stems from the tradition of Jewish prophecy Hobbes refers to. According to Seth Rogovoy, Dylan adopted "the mode of Jewish prophetic discourse" in terms of his song content, his style of delivery, and his relationship to the audience (9). However, Dylan has rejected and continues to reject any connection to his being a prophet, just as he rejected the "spokesman of his generation" title; nonetheless, he has an affinity for and frequently

uses the language of prophecy.[99] As Baez explains of her longtime friend's music, "Everything is forgiven when he sings" (qtd. in Curtin).

Dylan imbues his visionary song-poems with surrealistic, dreamlike imagery like that by Rimbaud and Ginsberg, Rimbaud's repudiation of any kind of authority, and Ginsberg's socially conscious poetics (Gould Axelrod, Roman, and Travisano 334). Therefore, contrary to popular belief, Dylan did not stop protesting as soon as he plugged in. Going electric was an evolutionary gesture that is itself revolutionary. Committing to the Rimbaudian mission to continuously be "absolutely modern," Dylan used surrealistic, psychedelic lyric poetry set to music to challenge the establishment, "to foster a more humane society, and to liberate the human spirit" like Ginsberg (Rimbaud, "Farewell" 209; Gould Axelrod, Roman, and Travisano 334). Dylan once remarked that Ginsberg's poetry was his first sign of a new consciousness, of an awareness of regenerative possibilities of America (Tytell 64). Meeting Ginsberg in 1963 and then becoming friends with him is part of what helped shape Dylan's visionary persona that defined his career in the mid-1960s prior to his motorcycle accident in 1966.[100] Before his meeting and befriending Ginsberg in 1963, Dylan had at least read *Howl* and Kerouac's *On the Road*. In his autobiography *Chronicles: Volume One*, as Dylan speaks of his first few months living in Greenwich Village New York City in 1961, he explains that *On*

[99] This is evident in albums such as *John Wesley Harding* (1967) and, perhaps more obviously, throughout his so-called Born-Again years, which include studio albums *Slow Train Coming* (1979) and *Saved* (1980), but the language of prophecy is a vibrant thread woven throughout the fabric of Dylan's oeuvre. The topic of Dylan as prophet is so evident that in Pope Benedict's *John Paul, My Beloved Predecessor*, he expresses his concern over Pope John Paul's interest in Dylan when the late Pope invited the rocker to sing at the Congress at Bologna in 1997: "There was reason to be skeptical—I was, and in some ways I still am—over whether it was really right to allow this type of 'prophet' to appear" (qtd. in McCormick).

[100] A month after the release of *Blonde on Blonde*, amid a lengthy tour rumored to have been fueled by amphetamines, Dylan suffered a motorcycle accident near his Woodstock, NY home on July 29, 1966. He used this as an occasion to withdraw from society until he traveled to Nashville in late 1967 to record *John Wesley Harding*, which was markedly different from its predecessors.

the Road "had been like a bible for me" (Dylan, *Chronicles* 57). Additionally, he once expressed that it was after reading Kerouac and Ginsberg that "he realized that there were other people like him somewhere in the land" (Gilmore 237). While the personal connection with Ginsberg is more overt—as a 1960's Kerouac cloistered himself away from the countercultural movement he helped ignite, which was slowly morphing into the hippie movement that he scorned and that Ginsberg encouraged—both Ginsberg and Kerouac's works were indeed models for Dylan. If Ginsberg encouraged the visionary in Dylan, then reading Kerouac introduced him to the Hipster characterization and spontaneous prose or "breathless, dynamic bop poetry phrases" (Dylan, *Chronicles* 57).[101] As Laurence Coupe explains, Kerouac "woke Bob Dylan to world minstrelry [*sic*]" (79). Prior to his plugging in, Dylan says he was inspired by the culture cultivated by Ginsberg, Kerouac, and other Beats like Gregory Corso and Lawrence Ferlinghetti: "Once I'd slipped in beyond the fringes it was like my six-string guitar became a crystal magic wand and I could move things like never before" (236). This sentiment encapsulates the position of the Rimbaudian and Beat visionary poet on the fringes of society, creating art from the interior, which can, like magic, *do* something, *change* something in his exterior world.

Dylan's composition style changes centrally from his folk rock to "vision music" periods (qtd. in Gleason). I explain in the previous chapter that he began experimenting with less contrived, more spontaneous or automatic writing on *Another Side of Bob Dylan* (1964), an approach that becomes fully realized on *Bringing It All Back Home* (1965). The "subliminal" composition style, as one journalist put it, coalesces with Dylan's electric period; such that

[101] Hipster in the midcentury use of the term—"A person who is, or purports to be, hip; one who is aware, well-informed, or in the know, especially in regard to jazz music and culture"—rather than the term used since the 1990s to connote the stereotype of the ironic, privileged Generation X-er or Millennial who adopts aspects of the bohemian culture on a surface level ("Hipster").

plugging gestures freedom to compose spontaneously (qtd. in Gleason). In music journalist Mikal Gilmore's *Rolling Stone* obituary for Ginsberg, he credits Dylan's new poetic expressions to the Beats,

> indeed, when [Dylan] made his startling transition to the electric, free-association style of music found on *Highway 61 Revisited* and *Blonde on Blonde* (and again later with *Blood on the Tracks*), Dylan was taking the language, cadences and imagery of the Beats and applying them to a new form. The impact of this melding on 1960's music[…]was colossal. (237).

Blood on the Tracks is, essentially, a reworded, reformulated *On the Road*, as it subscribes to Kerouac's version of the American landscape. The album's central motif is "the impromptu auto journey of escape into adventure" (Hampton, "Tangled" 706). What is significant about the composition of *Blood on the Tracks* is that Dylan resuscitates the composition style and the "language, cadences, and imagery of the Beats" he applied to "a new form" that he had used in his visionary years from 1965-1966. In this chapter, I focus on the visionary aspects, as inspired by Rimbaud, Ginsberg, and Kerouac, of Dylan's *Highway 61 Revisited* and *Blonde on Blonde*, using select songs to bolster my claim that like his Beat counterparts, Dylan uses the visionary poetic mode to protest against the establishment and mainstream society. In the spirit of Blake's sentiment, "I must Create a system, or be enslav'd by another Man's," like the Beat poets, Dylan creates his own system of visionary protest to end his enslavement by the folk movement (*Jerusalem* 1.10.20). His new system reinvigorates Rimbaud's visionary poetics and the Beats' New Vision with a quintessentially Dylanesque psychedelic irony, such that he continues to protest, but in his own way.

III.

The first line of Dylan's self-penned liner notes on *Desire* not only names Rimbaud—"on the heels of Rimbaud"—but also alludes to Ginsberg and Kerouac, as New Jersey refers

to Ginsberg's childhood home and "moving like a dancing bullet thru the secret streets of a hot New Jersey night filled with venom and wonder" sounds like a line out of Kerouac's Duluoz Legend books.[102] The liner note is exemplary of the fact that Dylan constantly alludes to Rimbaud, Ginsberg, and Kerouac even outside of his visionary albums and is inspired by each writer's work in differing ways. While some may claim that the intertextual links mark Dylan as derivative, this is far too reductive a claim. Part of his method to help shape the rock genre as independent from rock 'n' roll involves Dylan's forging his own brand of spontaneous composition that is indeed in dialogue with that of his predecessors, not unlike how the Beats borrow from each other and their own literary mentors. What is important to note is that despite the fact that Rimbaudian and Beat poetics were evidently a part of his process at the time, he sets music apart from written literature. His poetics is founded on the central principles of lyric poetry as an oral and aural art, which circles back to Rogovoy's explanation of the link between Dylan and the Hebrew Bible's prophets whose vocalized protest songs are recorded in *Nevi'im* (the Book of Prophets). In a recent interview conducted for Martin Scorsese's *Rolling Thunder Review: A Bob Dylan Story*, the Nobel Laureate says that in the past people memorized poems, but "Nowadays, lines that people remember are lines from songs, lyrics from songs." Dylan is right. It is more probable that people recall lyrics from music than lines from poetry, and, for the most part, memorizing poetry has been entirely phased out of our primary and secondary education in the United States. He then notes how remarkable it was that Ginsberg broke through, because people still remember those first few lines of *Howl*. Regarding Dylan's poetics, there is an implicit

[102] In chronological order as per the narrative of Kerouac's life, the Duluoz Legend books include: *Visions of Gerard* (1963), *Doctor Sax* (1959), *Maggie Cassidy* (1959), *Vanity of Duluoz* (1968), *On the Road* (1957), *Visions of Cody* (1972), *The Subteranneans* (1958), *Tristessa* (1960), *The Dharma Bums* (1958), *Desolation Angels* (1965), *Lonesome Traveler* (1960), *Big Sur* (1962), and *Satori in Paris* (1966).

hierarchy between poems and song lyrics. Unlike the Beatles who, starting with their 1967 *Sgt. Peppers and the Lonely Hearts Club Band*, included printed lyrics to their songs in album jackets, Dylan does no such thing. Instead, he forces his audience to engage in an aural relationship with his oral poetry. Separate from his songs but very much a result of his visionary period is *Tarantula* (written in 1965-66 but delayed for publication until 1971), a book of poems that follows in the abstract, surreal, stream-of-consciousness Rimbaudian style that alludes methodologically to the original trio of Beat writers: Ginsberg, Kerouac, and William S. Burroughs. It is clear throughout his lengthy career that Dylan's premier artistic expression is lyric poetry—song. Since he is an artist, he has flirted with other media: memoir, painting, sculpting, welding, and even more recently the art of distilling whiskey. However, everything circles back to music. This is why, for the purposes of this discussion on spontaneous composition in his visionary period, I focus on the music; therefore, while his poetic liner notes that comment on the music are relevant, *Tarantula*, albeit spontaneously composed in the Beat vein, is worthy of a separate project.

In the same category of written poetry as *Tarantula* are Dylan's paratextual liner notes which serve to explain, albeit abstractly, the material on select albums and elucidate how Dylan distinguishes between poems and songs. *The Times They Are A-Changin'* is the first record that contains self-penned liner notes, as it features "11 Outlined Epitaphs" (though there are only seven discrete poems) that obscure his true biographical background. One epitaph features a poeticized dialogue about the dichotomy between poems and songs,

> "an' poetry makes me feel good"
> "but…"
> "an' poetry makes me feel happy"
> "ok but…"
> "for the lack of a better word"
> "but what about the songs you sing on stage?"

"they're nothin' but the unwindin' of
my happiness" (Dylan, Liner…*Times* 5.29-36)

The speaker—presumably Dylan or at least a persona of Dylan's—connects poems and song lyrics to happiness, but while poetry "makes [him] feel good," songs are more instinctual, subliminal expressions, or "the unwindin'" of his happiness. In the unnamed poem on the back of *Bringing It All Back Home*, he extends the distinction,

…my poems
are written in a rhythm of unpoetic distortion/
divided by pierced ears. false eyelashes/sub-
tracted by people constantly torturing each
other. with a melodic purring line of descriptive
hollowness – seen at times through dark sunglasses
an' other forms of psychic explosion. a song is
anything that can walk by itself/i am called
a songwriter. a poem is a naked person…some
people say that i am a poet. (Liner…*Bringing* 62-71)

He contrasts the position of a poem versus a song, marking a poem as individual expression—"a naked person"—whereas, "a song is / anything that can walk by itself." This is a nod to the history of lyric poetry as poetry set to music (for example, by a lyre), which was intended to be listened to publicly, such as in the traditions of Medieval Provençal troubadours and thirteenth century Italian troubadours. While the troubadour tradition had died out with the Bubonic Plague, Dylan revived it with his songs, which he sharply contrasts with his written poetry. Similar to how surviving the Bubonic Plague shifted the troubadour art—characterized by musical poetic fiction about courtly love—to realist literature inspired by experiences of the Black Death,[103] facing his mortality in his 1966 motorcycle accident shift Dylan's artistic style.

[103] Famous examples of such realist literature that is centered around people's experiences with the Plague includes Giovanni Boccaccio's *The Decameron* and Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*.

There is a curious ellipsis, one of few throughout the poem on the back of *Bringing It All Back Home*, which creates a paused effect just after his final distinction that "a poem is a naked person…." He follows the ellipses with "some / people say that i am a poet," which tonally refers back to the line, "i am called / a songwriter" (Dylan, Liner…*Bringing* 62-71). Significantly, both of these passive statements contain line breaks, such that the labels others use to brand his work remain under his control, as the line breaks are a poetic device under the control of the poet to generate pause. Dylan has always resisted labels, as seen with his rejection of "spokesman of his generation" and anything connecting him to modern prophecy. His resistance to labels is apparent based on his deflection of any question about singer versus poet, to which he once answered by referring to himself as "more of a song and dance man," and on another occasion as a "trapeze artist" (qtd. in Gleason; qtd. in Corcoran 10). On a sincerer note, he once explained, "I see myself as it all[…]poet, singer, songwriter, custodian, gatekeeper[…]all of it. I feel 'confined' when I have to choose one or the other" (16). Similarly, in this liner note, he releases himself from the confinement of labels others use to categorize him by inserting ellipses and line breaks. We can only guess what is in the empty space. Perhaps with those pauses he encourages his reader to think of other innovative American artists who too resist labels, such as Walt Whitman who resolutely cultivated mystery over clarity to counter any categorization on others' terms (Folsom and Price).

Paratextual liner notes made up of surreal Beat-like poetry serve to highlight the literariness of his music by emphasizing that pop music is legitimate art. The prose-poem on the back of *Highway 61 Revisited* astutely encapsulates, albeit abstractly, his purpose as songwriter and performer: "I cannot say the word eye any more …. when I speak this word

eye, it is as if I am speaking somebody's eye that I faintly remember …. there is no eye – only a series of mouths – long live the mouths" (Dylan, Liner…*Highway*). I read "eye" as the *I* marked by alterity, Rimbaud's "*I* is someone else," particularly because Dylan differentiates between the his essential identity—the personhood only he himself has access to—and that which he performs outside of himself: "when I speak this word eye" (Rimbaud, "To Paul" 305; Dylan, Liner…*Highway*). Just as Rimbaud's *I* illustrates the alterity between one's essential self and how one speaks of oneself to others, Dylan's "eye" represents the various masks Dylan creates for himself through the Rimbaudian process of self-study and self-fashioning, because "it is as if I am speaking somebody's eye that I faintly remember" (Liner…*Highway*). And, due to the fact that he performs solely when wearing masks, his public identity is changeable, so it is the audience that remains stable: "there is no eye – only a series of mouths – long live the mouths" (Liner…*Highway*).

IV.

As a fully developed visionary lyricist in *Highway 61 Revisited* and *Blonde on Blonde*, Dylan puts forth the passion and violence of the spirit "in which the artist becomes the accuser of a wayward society" to move his audience, the 'mouths' (Fowlie 39). Wallace Fowlie links this sort of vocabulary with the originator of this lineage, William Blake. For Dylan, that Blakean passion and violence of the spirit is epitomized by the crack of the snare drum, the first sound on *Highway 61 Revisited* that begins "Like a Rolling Stone," Canadian poet and critic Stephen Scobie explains, "There's never been a moment in the history of rock and roll to equal the excitement of that first sharp crack of the snare drum. Insistently, arrogantly, authoritatively, it inaugurated a new world" (qtd. in Gould Axelrod, Roman, and Travisano 333). Scobie's remark that the song "inaugurated a new world" is key here,

because *Bringing It All Back Home* worked towards establishing the aural quality of Dylan's vision music that defines *Highway 61 Revisited* and is exemplified by "Like a Rolling Stone." In fact, what starts on *Bringing It All Back Home* continues on *Highway 61 Revisited*. Dylan scholar Clinton Heylin refers to the song as "the *one* that opened the doors of perception," which signals a shift in Dylan's and his audience's consciousness (Heylin 290). Similarly, in his Rock and Roll Hall of Fame speech for Dylan's induction in 1988, Bruce Springsteen followed up an account of when he first heard "Like a Rolling Stone": "It sounded like somebody'd kicked open the door to your mind" (Springsteen). Springsteen went on to explain that Dylan is revolutionary in the same way that Elvis was, but "Elvis freed your body, Bob freed your mind. He showed us that just because the music was innately physical, it did not mean that it was anti-intellect." This insight connotes the concept of body-mind holism—the integration of body and mind in the exploration of prosody—in my discussion on Kerouac and his bebop influence. Since Dylan is directly inspired by Kerouac, from whom he heard "his own American language for the first time," it seems intuitive that he would seek to engage with the same body-mind holism that Kerouac took from alto saxophonist Charlie Parker (Atkinson).

Just as with "Subterranean Homesick Blues" and other songs on *Bringing It All Back Home*, form and content coalesce in "Like a Rolling Stone." That "Insisten[t], arrogan[t], authoritative[e]" snare drum crack that "inaugurated a new world" introduces the full band that together created a whole sound that is unmistakably "Like a Rolling Stone," and which resonates throughout the rest of the album and into *Blonde on Blonde* (Scobie qtd. in Gould Axelrod, Roman, and Travisano 333). The standout is Dylan's "infinitely nuanced voice" that pierces through as he sings directly to the audience rather than to Miss Lonely, about

whom he sings. Greil Marcus explains that Dylan's voice here is how "the song stakes its claim on eternity," because his voice is "almost authoritarian monotone (not unlike Ginsberg reading 'Howl')," as well as "compassionate, tragic…but also angry, vengeful, gleeful, ironic, weary, spectral, haunting" (*Like* 7). His voice and the accompanying music represent the sort of spontaneous revolution the song's content demands, as announced by the first crack of the snare. The "Once upon a time" opening line denotes a nursery rhyme or a fairytale, which is completely burst open by the "didn't you" at the end of the next line. In the first few lines of the song, the listener becomes certain that the singer is sneering at high society, because its former member Miss Lonely who "used to dress so fine" and throw "the bums a dime" is as successful—as per societal standards—as this resolutely failed attempt at a nursery rhyme (Dylan, "Like").

Most scholars agree that every time one listens to "Like a Rolling Stone," they hear something else. For years, I heard the obvious: a scornful Dylan towards a pretentious Miss Lonely who has been knocked off her high horse, or rather the diplomat's chrome horse. Is Miss Lonely Edie Sedgwick like the rumors claim? If so, is the diplomat Andy Warhol who actually did have a penchant for Siamese cats? I stopped asking myself who Miss Lonely may represent when I realized that she may have purposefully withdrawn from high society, which would cast her as a Beat-type, Hipster archetype who herself scorns high society from which she drops out. I am also inclined to believe that there are shades of Dylan in Miss Lonely, as he was discontented with his fame and the people fame forced him to associate with.[104]

[104] Recall that a post-motorcycle accident Dylan told his first biographer that the characters he sings about mirror himself: "when I used words like 'he' and 'it' and 'they,' and talking about other people, I was really talking about nobody but me" (qtd. in Heylin 292).

Miss Lonely is a socialite who is doomed to fall; she is a character out of Kerouac who, like a rolling stone, represents the refusal to be just one thing, to be boxed into a certain category—like folk rock or celebrity—"to be pinned down as a creative artist or as a person" (Gould Axelrod, Roman, and Travisano 333). Like a rolling stone, Miss Lonely seeks to transform herself, which makes her antithetical to Queen Jane from "Queen Jane Approximately," who epitomizes imprisoned decadence. Both ladies are socialites who are at odds with the high society they come from, but unlike Miss Lonely who seeks transformation, Queen Jane is "sick of all this repetition," or weary of the mundanity in her world (Dylan, "Queen"). While the singer seems to deride Miss Lonely, he offers an olive branch to Queen Jane: whenever she decides to drop out of high society, "Won't you come see me, Queen Jane" ("Queen").[105] Conversely, Miss Lonely has already withdrawn, as she is "on [her] own, with no direction home" ("Like"). She is an "injured soul, monster, an artist, a saint, or an everyperson" who is jaded by the ceaseless parade of, as Rimbaud writes in "Circus," "Husky fellows. Some of them have exploited [her] worlds" (Gould Axelrod, Roman, and Travisano 338; Rimbaud, "Circus" 225). Dylan borrows from Rimbaud's poem to illustrate the mutant world Miss Lonely is surrounded by, which parallels that in "On the Road Again" from *Bringing It All Back Home*. Here, "Napoleon in rags," the chrome horse-riding diplomat "Who carried on his shoulder a Siamese cat," and "the jugglers and the clowns" are versions of the bizarre catalogue of people in "Circus," the "fools, hyenas, Molochs, old fits of madness and wily demons" (Dylan, "Like"; Rimbaud, "Circus" 225). As in *Bringing It All Back Home*, high society is characterized by deranged surrealism or perhaps even grotesquerie, where "They're all drinking, thinking they've got it made" (Dylan, "Like").

[105] "Can You Please Crawl Out Your Window" and "Positively Fourth Street," both of which were recorded during the *Highway 61 Revisited* session and released as singles, contain similar themes.

The speaker in "Circus" concludes, "I alone have the key to this wild circus," and that key in the song is Miss Lonely's diamond ring the singer sarcastically advises her to "pawn it babe" (Rimbaud, "Circus" 225; Dylan, "Like"). She could trade in her diamond ring, her key to high society, for an outlier's existence, where she can be "invisible now" alleviated from any "secrets to conceal" ("Like").

The era-defining riff and the whirlwind of sound in "Like a Rolling Stone" accompany the us-versus-them theme that Dylan helps popularize, so the song exemplifies Dylan's ability to transform himself *and* the culture around him (Gould Axelrod, Roman, and Travisano 333). The high society Miss Lonely has withdrawn from is fully realized in the next song, "Tombstone Blues," whose title connotes a litany (Tombstone) of confusion (Blues). In his podcast *Bob Dylan: Album by Album*, Ben Burrell refers to "Tombstone Blues" as "protest 2.0," because it amplifies the us-versus-them mentality, as it is all about Dylan's distrust of authority, which he deems foolish enough to vote Jack the Ripper as "the head of the chamber of commerce" and to trust doctors whose medical advice is simply to "not let the boys in" (Burnell "Part 2"; Dylan, "Tombstone"). However, it is not the clear-cut folk protest song Dylan divorced himself from; instead, it is highly surrealistic, and its meaning lies in its use of comic absurdity. Martin Esslin theorizes the concept of comic absurdity in his essay "The Theatre of the Absurd,"

> The Theatre of the Absurd shows the world as an incomprehensible place. The spectators see the happenings on the stage entirely from the outside, without ever understanding the full meaning of these strange patterns of events, as newly arrived visitors might watch life in a country of which they have not yet mastered the language…For while the happenings on the stage are absurd, they yet remain recognizable as somehow related to real life with *its* absurdity, so that eventually the spectators are brought face to face with the irrational side of their existence. (5)

As spectators, we are not meant to understand this world where Delilah sits alone laughing so hard that she cries, where Ma Rainey and Beethoven are setting up their sleeping bag together. Instead, the comically absurd world is meant to "br[ing us] face to face with the irrational side of [our] existence." Dylan engages with the comically absurd in a spirit of protest against the nature of mid-1960's reality. "Tombstone Blues" compels the audience to look at their sociopolitical landscape as spectators who observe genuinely, disregarding all conventional pretense and political fakery.

Even though the song uses the twisted fairytale form, from its onset, we know these absurdities exist solely in the adult world, because, "The sweet pretty things are in bed now of course" (Dylan, "Tombstone"). Dylan asks us—the spectators—to question the structures of society, which may "remain recognizable as somehow related to real life," but are so absurd "that eventually the spectators are brought face to face with the irrational side of their existence" (Esslin 5). Amid the torrent of imagery, there are two verses about the Commander-in-Chief, who was Lyndon B. Johnson at the time. In a bizarre dialogue between John the Baptist—a Judeo-Christian prophet who is dutifully "torturing a thief" but sickened by his actions—and "his hero the Commander-in-Chief," the later chases a fly, "Saying, 'Death to all those who would whimper and cry' / And dropping a barbell he points to the sky / Saying, 'The sun's not yellow it's chicken'" (Dylan, "Tombstone"). The final image is multi-layered, which is quintessential Dylan, both in his visionary era and beyond: the sun is yellow like a chicken, which connotes chicken as in coward and even yellow-bellied cowardice. The Commander-in-Chief, who is almost like a ruler out of *Gulliver's Travels*, chases a fly while he sentences anyone who expresses feelings of sadness to death. This is unmistakably an allusion to Johnson's Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, which would

ultimately result in the death of tens of thousands American men and countless Vietnamese. John the Baptist is uncomfortable and expresses reluctance, but is obligated by his hero, who drops a barbell—a symbol of strength—and follows up the death sentence up with, "The sun's not yellow it's chicken." Dylan calls him a coward but in the most surreal way; he protests by using comic absurdity, such that this is indeed "protest 2.0" (Burnell, "Part 2"). It is important to note that comic absurdity is the sibling of psychedelic irony, but the former is more distinctly humorous. Nonetheless, each is marked by its "mind-expanding, *anima-mundi*-manifesting" effect (Gates).

Anti-authoritarianism is the driving factor behind most of the songs from his visionary period. Daniel Karlin remarks that writers like Whitman and Kerouac inspired Dylan's "constructedly American" work, which attends to American breakdown and apocalypticism, or his "attempt to make sense of things not making sense anymore" (qtd. in Corcoran 16). Kennedy's been murdered, Camelot is dead, and now what we are left with is this surrealistic world, which is juxtaposed with the realism in "It Takes a Lot to Laugh, It Takes a Train to Cry" and "From Buick 6," both of which are traveling songs that harken back to Kerouac's road. The surrealistic nature of "Tombstone Blues" renders it the formalistic opposite a song such as "Masters of War," which is clear and pointed in its condemnation of the corruptive powers of war profiteers. However, in his visionary period, Dylan subscribes to the fact that André Breton illuminated in his 1934 lecture that surrealism is in itself a revolutionary movement (Breton). In fact, "Tombstone Blues" is exemplary of black humor, a term Breton coined. The key to the revolutionary surrealism in "Tombstone Blues" comes at the end, where the singer directly addresses another character, "Dear Lady":

> Now I wish I could write you a melody so plain
> That could hold you dear lady from going insane

That could ease you and cool you and cease the pain
Of your useless and pointless knowledge. (Dylan, "Tombstone)

The singer comes from an enlightened place with his unique form of consciousness, whereas Dear Lady's assumedly university-level "useless and pointless knowledge" brings her to the brink of insanity. The artist attempts to step in and help her "cease the pain," so the song ends with a celebration of anti-intellectualism and body-mind holism. Every authoritative power, beginning with the knowledge-creating ones like universities, are knocked down in this song. "Tombstone Blues" functions much like that in "Subterranean Homesick Blues," wherein the singer and his fellow countercultural youths must be wary of all authority.

At least Dylan offers help to the collegiate Dear Lady, whereas he expresses utter disdain towards bourgeois journalist Mr. Jones in "Ballad of a Thin Man."[106] Dylan sneers at Mr. Jones who appears as the emblem of middle-class America; Mr. Jones may be well read and chummy with professors and lawyers, but he is completely disconnected from the revolution that is happening around him: "Because something is happening here / But you don't know what it is / Do you, Mister Jones?" ("Ballad"). Drummer Bobby Gregg said, "This is a *nasty* song," which is epitomized not only in the lyrics, but also in the music and in Dylan's stifled, seething laugh in the fifth line that stems from utter frustration (qtd. in Burnell, "Part 3"). Dylan's frustration comes from journalists dissecting his song lyrics, misusing them to express sentiments he never intended, and especially from journalists claiming he no longer sings protest songs. As he told a Japanese audience in March 1986, "This is a song I wrote in response to people who ask questions all the time…Y'don't wanna

[106] Clinton Heylin reports that "Ballad of a Thin Man" "has rarely left Dylan's live set for long," and in recent years, Dylan has showcased faithful renditions of "Ballad of a Thin Man" in his encore sets (325). This is significant, because he usually changes songs' compositions for his concerts, but he has sung an album-like version of "Ballad of a Thin Man" for the last several years.

answer no more questions…you gotta put somebody in their place" (Dylan qtd. in Heylin 320). In the song, Mr. Jones is uncomfortable, because he attempts to enter into various scenes that are like funhouse mirror versions of the Hipster counterculture in which he simply does not belong. Just as in other songs, there are surreal aspects here, such as: the sword swallower who crosses himself and clicks his high heels, the one-eyed midget who demands cow's milk, and the lines, "You put your eyes in your pocket / And your nose on the ground" (Dylan, "Ballad"). At one point, Mr. Jones even realizes he is talking to himself. The manic tack piano and organ represent the madness of these scenes that diverge so much from Mr. Jones' daily life. As Patrick Crotty explains, Dylan has an "almost uncanny instinct for fusing form and feeling" (qtd. in Corcoran 12).

Similar to "Like a Rolling Stone," "Ballad of a Thin Man" pushes the rock genre further while continuing to hammer out the theme, presented in various forms throughout these first several songs and that continues onto the second side of the album. Dylan attacks the elite and uses themes such as mania and madness to expand upon the psychedelic surrealism in *Bringing It All Back Home*. Madness is an important theme in the Beat literature Dylan read and was inspired by. As mentioned in earlier chapters, original Beats like Kerouac and Ginsberg endeavored to break out of the confining middle-class shackles they were born into. They glorified cowboys, criminals, and hobos as examples of people who had successfully dropped out of society. Ginsberg, whose mother was mentally ill and constantly in and out of asylums, added madness to this concept of societal outlier. Ginsberg's muses—his mother, Kerouac, and Neal Cassady—were all mad to some extent. He and Kerouac theorized that conventional, mainstream society rendered the exalted ones, the "best minds" mad. Recall that *Howl* begins with, "I saw the best mind of my generation destroyed by

madness…" (Ginsberg, *Howl* 134). Kerouac builds upon this notion by expressing that he is only interested in those society deemed as mad: "the only people for me are the mad ones, the ones who are mad to live mad to talk, mad to be saved, desirous of everything, at the same time, the ones who never yawn or say a commonplace thing, but burn, burn, burn like fabulous yellow roman candles exploding like spiders across the stars" (*On* 5-6). Ever the nonconformists, the Beats embraced and lionized those whom society disregarded as mad.

Dylan lifts this Beat concept and grafts it onto his music as a thematic device to promote a sense of mania. An example of this is the twisted fairytale he touches on in "Like a Rolling Stone" and fully fleshes out in the title song and "Desolation Row." The first two songs explain his method, by which he flips the script by depicting mainstream society as mad. The world that debutante Miss Lonely drops out of is the one marked by madness in "Tombstone Blues," whereas the artist's intuition is privileged over Dear Lady's "useless and pointless" formal education (Dylan, "Tombstone"). The third song on the album, "It Takes a Lot to Laugh, It Takes a Train to Cry" is rooted in the realism the singer is traveling away from, and he travels by mail train, which sounds Kerouacian. However, whereas Kerouac writes of traveling by boxcars that carry the freight of private companies, which Ginsberg memorializes in *Howl*—"who lit cigarettes in boxcars, boxcars boxcars racketing through snow towards lonesome farms in grandfather night"—in Dylan's version, he travels in a freight carrier that serves the federal government (135). This detail reminds us again that Dylan protests against the establishment, against oppressive powers that govern over mainstream society. The establishment is represented by Mr. Jones in "Ballad of a Thin Man," whose descending bass line mimics Mr. Jones' descent into madness because he is a square attempting to enter into, understand, and report on Hipster counterculture.

The corrupt powers of Mr. Jones' conventional world are spotlighted in various ways in the title track, "Highway 61 Revisited," which stands out sonically from the rest of the songs, particularly in its use of the tack piano that creates a honky-tonk sound, which is amplified by the whistle. The whistle is the manic sound, the sound of the surreal that characterizes myriad odd situations, which all share a common theme of corrupt power that can only be sorted out in one place: Highway 61. For example, the song begins with a colloquial conversation between God—who we can no longer rely on to be good—and Abraham about the binding of Isaac, which God suggests should take place "Out on Highway 61" (Dylan, "Highway"). At one point, Mack the Finger enquires of Louie the King where he can get rid of unwanted items such as "forty red and blue shoestrings / And a thousand telephones that don't ring" ("Highway"). Burnell remarks that like the song's eccentric whistle, the image of "a thousand telephones that don't ring" is representative of the madness seen elsewhere on the album ("Part 4"). Madness connotes insanity and anger, which are key features to being outliers of a society; madness makes the outliers qualified to comment on society *because* they are apart from it. The song's mad situations, each of which highlight different forms of corrupt power, can only be sorted "out on Highway 61," the birthplace of new musical frontiers. The whistle and the consistent Highway 61 punchline also typify Sara Gates' concept of psychedelic irony. Psychedelic irony is an uncanny, aesthetic mode that does not necessarily point to the singer or listener actually taking psychedelics, but instead it promotes psychedelic-like, mind-expanding effects and contain ironic twists that both resist and invite interpretation. In this case, the psychedelic irony lies in the use of Highway 61 as the answer to the corruption from Mr. Jones' world and the

conventional knowledge that is causing Dear Lady to go insane. Dylan promotes blues-inspired rock as the antidote to conventional society.

Burnell asserts that no album changed Dylan's career as much as *Highway 61 Revisited*. Dylan knew that, as shown in the title. Highway 61 is the blues highway, which is indicative of the fact that the blues is the undercurrent of Dylan's new style, and "revisited" signifies change (Burnell, "Part 5"). From the onset, Dylan takes his own advice from "It's All Over Now, Baby Blue," to "Strike another match, go start anew," and he endeavors to escape the celebrity shaped by his earlier career. He is Miss Lonely who has dropped out, and perhaps in the past, he was like Queen Jane who is stuck. In "Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues," whose title connotes the album's twisted fairytale pattern, Dylan cycles through the same themes throughout. There is corruption "Up on Housing Project Hill," where "It's either fortune or fame / […]Though neither of them are to be what they claim," and elsewhere he sings about the corrupt authorities who "just stand around and boast" about blackmail and destroying Angel "Who looked so fine at first / But left looking just like a ghost" (Dylan, "Just"). Angel was not only spoiled by corrupt authority, but he is brought to a similar state to Mr. Jones, who we recall attempts to insert himself into Hipster counterculture.

Like Miss Lonely, the jaded singer in "Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues" endeavors to escape. The last stanza is entirely autobiographical, so it is Dylan himself who desires escape, in this case "back to New York City":

> I started out on burgundy
> But soon hit the harder stuff
> Everbody said they'd stand behind me
> When the game got rough
> But the joke was on me
> There was nobody even there to call my bluff
> I'm going back to New York City
> I do believe I've had enough. ("Just")

Here he sings about the 1965 Newport Folk Festival and the ensuing tour when he first plugged in. "Burgundy" is folk music and "the harder stuff" is electrified rock. While he persevered and changed the history of rock, it was a trying experience: "I do believe I've had enough" (Dylan, "Just"). He wants to escape back to New York City. Before presenting the last song, which many critics and fan argue is one of his best, in "Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues," he cycles through all of the themes from *Bringing It All Back Home* through to the previous song, "Highway 61 Revisited": personal and professional evolution, anti-authoritarianism, twisted fairytale, escape, and even madness, as he finds himself "howling at the moon" (Burnell, "Part 5"; Dylan, "Just").

Now that the audience has been reminded of all the themes, here comes "Desolation Row," whose resplendence is difficult to capture. In four days of *Highway 61 Revisited* sessions, six takes of "Desolation Row" were recorded, some of which featured electric bass and electric guitar, but Dylan fortuitously settled on an all-acoustic version. Just like the effect of the acoustic triptych on *Bringing It All Back Home*, there is power to the only acoustic song on *Highway 61 Revisited*.[107] Charlie McCoy's acoustic guitar nods to Dylan's former style, but his style the song starts off with modernizes Dylan's former acoustic string sound. At one point in the eleven minutes, McCoy's Mexican-like style switches to country, which Burnell claims highlights the spontaneous nature of the recording process, as two different takes have been spliced into one ("Part 5"). Furthermore, there are imperfections throughout that Burnell says gives the song a "ramshackle" effect to keep it fresh ("Part 5").

The song is a twisted fairytale sung by an observer of the carnage on the otherworldly, surrealistic location of Desolation Row, whose name derives from knitting

[107] Curiously, the first takes were electric, but Dylan quickly made the switch to acoustic.

together Kerouac's *Desolation Angels* and John Steinbeck's *Cannery Row*. Remember that Karlin categorizes Dylan's work as "constructedly American" like Kerouac's, as he too "attempt[s] to make sense of things not making sense anymore" (qtd. in Corcoran 16). Heylin explains, "This 'far out' vision depicts a totalitarian world where one's only escape is the ominously named Desolation Row" (Heylin 301). Here, he overtly pays homage to Kerouac and Steinbeck while using psychedelic irony and other motifs cultivated throughout the album to protest American breakdown and apocalypticism. Unlike Highway 61, Desolation Row is a parade of the grotesque, as it is populated by a sizeable cast of otherwise familiar characters who are all placed in disturbing scenarios, such as a moaning Romeo, Einstein who is "disguised as Robin Hood," and Cinderella who "put her hands in her back pockets / Bette Davis style" (Dylan, "Desolation"). In this mad place, people are restless: Some of the characters are on the road, some are readying themselves to be on the road, some like Casanova are punished for being there, and others like Ophelia are intrigued by it (Burnell, "Part 5"). While many of these characters are literary, it is important not to try and analyze them—which seems oxymoronic considering this is a literary dissertation, but bear with me—because Dylan was on a particularly anti-intellectual streak in 1965. As he told Nat Hentoff, "We have the literary world…[and] the museum types…which I also have no respect for…In my mind, if something is artistic or valid or groovy…it should be out in the open. It should be in the men's rooms" (qtd. in Heylin 302). Additionally, as Sam Shepard points out, "The point isn't to figure him out but to take him in" (qtd. in Corcoran 23). Therefore, rather than focus on the particular meaning behind, for instance, Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot fighting upon a tower like Thoor Ballylee while an audience of calypso singers laugh at them, I am more interested in his use of the road, which I cannot help but connect

to Kerouac as well as that central image of the blues highway, Highway 61. Heylin claims that this song is symbolic of the fact that while Dylan took from the Beats—as he even once remarked that "Desolation Row" is a "city song" from "that kind of New York type period" that was directly inspired by Ginsberg, whose poetry "sounds like the city"—he also embarked on his own path, creating his own unique, evolved style (qtd. in Heylin 301-302). The song, therefore, encapsulates the album title, as it is informed by previous artistic styles—blues and Beat poetry—but also modifies and modernizes, similar to how Muddy Waters resuscitated the Delta blues "Catfish Blues" with extra verses and an electric guitar.

"Desolation Row," which is ambitiously lengthy for a rock song in 1965—even longer than the likewise ambitiously lengthy "Like a Rolling Stone"—insists that the audience actively listen, because it conjures up vivid mental images as its lyrics weave from one vignette to the next in the stream-of-consciousness style, much like a swerving road. All of the madness and surrealism from the previous songs end up here on Desolation Row, which we recognize lives up to its name, as it forlornly opens with the news that "They're selling postcards of the hanging / …And the riot squad they're restless" (Dylan, "Desolation"). The hanging refers to the lynching of three black men that occurred in his hometown, Duluth, Minnesota on June 15, 1920, after which town folks sold postcards rendered from photos of the lynching. While this was not a rare occurrence, Dylan is affected by it. The next several verses illustrate the seediness of Desolation Row, where there is constantly impending doom, as "Everybody is making love / Or else expecting rain" ("Desolation"). "Expecting rain" is a military term for enemy fire, so on Desolation Row, everyone is either creating life or expecting imminent death (Burnell, "Part 5"). Some aspects seem ridiculous for the mere sake of comic absurdity, such as the fortune teller who quickly

takes her things inside to hide from the stars. But, there are myriad significant scenarios that connect to the Bible, history, and even events in the sociopolitical landscape of the time. For instance, the elusive, alcoholic Dr. Filth—which is perhaps a reference to Kerouac's *Doctor Sax*, but certainly a pseudonym for someone Dylan knew or knew of—seems like an important character, as he is a therapist who works with "all his sexless patients"; but alas, he is shrouded in mystery (Dylan, "Desolation"). Less vague are the people who, due to the Titanic sailing at dawn, shout the popular Leftist slogan at the time, "Which Side Are You On?" ("Desolation"). Organist Al Kooper once claimed that Desolation Row was Eighth Avenue in Manhattan, a section of the Deuce, a seedy area of Midtown teeming with junkies, prostitutes, and criminals like Herbert Huncke (qtd. in Burnell, "Part 5"). It was marked by emptiness and addiction to vices like Dr. Filth's world he keeps "Inside of a leather cup" ("Desolation").

Ultimately, the singer becomes addicted to this place as well, and typical of those experiencing addiction, he seems depressed. In the last verse, the singer morosely responds to someone who just wrote him a letter, "When you asked how I was doing / Was that some kind of a joke?" and then demands that the person not send him "no more letters no / Not unless you mail them / from Desolation Row" ("Desolation"). He is not well. He is under the addictive spell of Desolation Row and can no longer "read too good"; the world of meaning is behind him and he is completely entranced by this place ("Desolation"). A bird's eye view of the song reveals that like the preceding songs on the album, it too protests varying facets of mainstream society, where, for instance, Ophelia is a mere twenty-two years old but is "already an old maid" ("Desolation"). Here, however, an added element is an implicit protest against, as Robert Shelton writes, "simpleminded political commitment,"

because, "What difference which side you're on if you're sailing on the Titanic?" (Shelton 283). Like Kerouac, whose work was dictated by the New Vision, Dylan presents us in "Desolation Row" with a "cavalcade of rueful Americana" made up of "breath sentences of the mind"—or to use Ginsbergian terminology, "mind breaths"—set to a beautiful yet haunting melody (Atkinson). I take a cue from Dylan who once said, "The point is not understanding what I write but *feeling* it," because remember, Dylan obliges his audience to have an aural relationship with his oral poetry (qtd. in Heylin 315). And, this feeling is entirely individual to each listener.

V.

Highway 61 Revisited is widely considered a perfect album and one that reoriented Dylan's career; in fact, it could have easily terminated his career. Around the time of its release, Dylan began dressing differently in a characteristically 'mod' style, which shows his ability to expand and reinterpret his self as per Rimbaud's procedure. This reinvented 'mod-rocker' plays with the vision music mask he dons, which serves as a "cipher for the transmission of his enigmatic and arresting art" (Curtin). The fact that this "enigmatic and arresting art" does not spotlight guitars until "Desolation Row," not only exemplifies Dylan's refusal to do what others expect of him, but also encapsulates his attempt to shatter the public's image of the former folk Dylan alone onstage with his guitar (Burnell, "Part 4"). The album developed a rock sound that highlights other instruments like the piano and organ far more than guitars, which brands the album as possessing an individual sonic identity. Likewise, another significant aspect is that similar to some songs on *Bringing It All Back Home* and unlike songs on previous albums that typically end when Dylan stops singing, each track ends with lengthy instrumentation, sometimes with a considerable harmonica solo

such as in "It Takes a Lot to Laugh, It Takes a Train to Cry" and "From a Buick 6," which is another gesture of divorcing himself from the folk genre. The rhetorical implication here is that the whole band's sound is important. In those that end with a harmonica solo, such as "Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues," Dylan's harp functions like a final battle cry, an extension of the sentiments expressed verbally (Burnell, "Part 3").

Highway 61 Revisited is an apt title for its revolutionary sound, because it is revisiting Highway 61 in the spirit of reformulating the blues. Throughout its nine tracks, we are presented with a new rock sound that repeatedly delivers the same message with different nuances, which are expressed through a range themes and motifs: society and its authoritative powers are corrupt. Unlike earlier songs such as "Masters of War," "With God on Our Side," "Only a Pawn in Their Game" which are overt protest and exemplary of folk, the music from his visionary period epitomizes Rimbaudian procedure. His vision music is a product of the Beats' New Vision, which originates from the poet's interior exploration of his self; as Fowlie explains, a visionary poet "is the man who first looks at reality, then turns away from it and into himself" (57). In devoting himself fully to this method, Dylan sought to develop his own spontaneous composition style akin to Kerouac's spontaneous bop prosody. He discontinued previous writing practices that were more contrived and instead wrote from his faculty of spontaneous reason; as he explained to Hentoff in 1964, "From now on, I want to write from inside me, and to do that I'm going to have to get back to writing like I used to when I was ten—having everything come out naturally. The way I like to write is for it to come out the way I walk or talk" (qtd. in Hentoff). He also engaged in a hyper-spontaneous recording process, "*so* spontaneous, much of the time, that the musicians hardly know the song" (Rogovoy 78-79). We know from Dylan's memoir that Kerouac's *On*

the Road was like his bible in his first few years in New York City, and it is evident that Kerouac's own spontaneous method is important to Dylan. As Kerouac writes in a letter to his editor Donald Allen on March 19, 1957, "So I eschews [*sic*] 'selectivity' and follow free association of mind into limitless blow-on-subject seas of thought… with no discipline other than the story-line and the rhythm of rhetorical exploration and expostulated statement, like a fist coming down on a table with each complete utterance a bang!" (qtd. in Atkinson). This "free association of mind into limitless blow-on-subject seas of thought" is how a song such as "Tombstone Blues" exists, what with its surreal vignettes. Just as reading Kerouac was liberating for Dylan, listening to Dylan is liberating for the audience. Recall what Springsteen famously said, "Elvis freed your body, Bob freed your mind," which is shown throughout my discussion on the mind-expanding effect Dylan's vision music has. Additionally, Christopher Ricks' explanation about "Mr. Tambourine Man" is appropriate here in terms of the liberation that ensues upon listening to Dylan: "his pied piper myth encourages us to follow the unconscious where spontaneously it may lead us[…]As the smoke rings unfurl, we are liberated" (142). Dylan's spontaneous method encourages his listener to delve into their own spontaneous faculty; for instance, when listening to a song like "Tombstone Blues" or "Desolation Row," the audience must abandon any attempt at using conventional wisdom to make meaning of the surrealistic string of vignettes, and instead surrenders to the song world, which promotes liberation.

As with the blues, which, due to its body-mind holism renders the music and the lyrics as equally important, Dylan's vision music is "a language capable of translating his visions" (Fowlie 66). Again, these visions are, like Rimbaud's, "generated out of the work on the self and arise from the body" (Hampton, "Absolutely" 4). Nonetheless, like other

visionaries I have mentioned, Dylan becomes "the accuser of wayward society," and he is inspired by and inspires others with the "regenerative possibilities of America" (Fowlie 39; Tytell 64). While he distanced himself from any title, such as "spokesperson of his generation" or "modern prophet," Dylan does engage in sociocultural criticism in the mode of Hebrew Bible prophets. Instead of singing feel-good pop songs about romantic love, he challenges his listeners by unsettling and provoking them (Rogovoy 9). He does so by engaging synchronously with the spontaneous, both in terms of lyrical content and music. He uses his own spontaneous method, which, if you recall from the chapter about Ginsberg, inspired the latter's auto-poesy. Ginsberg was taken by Dylan's "own space-age media and electric machinery tunes" to produce music marked by spontaneity ("Some" 259).

VI.

In the first song on *Blonde on Blonde*, "Rainy Day Women #12 & 35," Dylan perpetuates the us-versus-them mentality blended with language from the harsh biblical systems of justice, because at every turn, with every action or non-action, "They'll stone ya" (Dylan, "Rainy"). In an attempt to unsettle and provoke mainstream, square society, he uses the biblical image as a double-entendre for consuming marijuana: "Everybody must get stoned" ("Rainy"). While it is not a particularly insightful song, especially when considered alongside "Stuck Inside of Mobile with the Memphis Blues Again," which depicts patterns of abstract art, "Pledging My Time," a tribute to the blues that reinvents aspects of Robert Johnson's "Come In My Kitchen," the epic "Sad-Eyed Lady of the Lowlands," a wedding song for Sara, or the satirical "Leopard-Skin Pill-Box Hat," which oozes with scorn, its consistent use of the double-entendre epitomizes the subterranean zeitgeist that of the 1960's white counterculture. The simultaneous feeling of smoking marijuana—the chemical

catalyst for liberation—and being penalized for being "young and able," "tryin' to make a buck," "riding in your car," "playing your guitar," and other such quotidian actions defines the "zone of turbulence" where those in the counterculture thrive (Leary ix). For the album, "Rainy Day Women #12 & 35" introduces the fact that Dylan's audience is stuck in a place where they experience alienation from mainstream society—albeit self-perpetuated—during a time of immense change for everyone, whether in the mainstream or in the counterculture.

Blonde on Blonde—the last in the triptych of the electric, visionary albums—is equally as complete as *Highway 61 Revisited* in terms of theme and sonic identity, although one that is difficult to define. In earlier albums, "big political and ethical problems were addressed with parables of injustice and outrage," which is what the peddler from "Visions of Johanna" offers (Hampton, "Absolutely" 19). The peddler is representative of an early Dylan around whom the ethical landscape has changed (18). Because this change is so dramatic, there is a palpable feeling of stuck-ness for the characters in the song's world. Shortly after meeting the peddler, we are introduced to the fiddler who is entirely overwhelmed by the visionary experience that is Johanna, the absent Madonna. The couplet that ventriloquizes the fiddler, "On the back of a fish truck that loads / While my conscience explodes," which signals to the fact that Dylan's employment of the visionary mode has formed a new ethical system that replaces that of his protest music (Dylan, "Visions"). His vision music is a new expression of sociocultural criticism that protests much like Ginsberg does in *Wichita Vortex Sutra*; here, instead of minidramas of injustice and prejudice about specific characters like Hattie Carroll, or protest songs filled with folk aphorisms, the visionary albums are defined by an exploration so deep into the private that it informs the public (Hampton, "Absolutely" 21). As Rimbaud declares in *Illuminations*, "Poetry will not

accompany action but will lead it"; likewise, Dylan's vision music is itself a type of action that shapes of the experiences of reality in the 1960s to provide its audience with a new ethical system (qtd. in Hampton, "Absolutely 3).

Ultimately, as explained in "Visions of Johanna," all that remains is visionary experience, which can neither be erased nor explained. The journey the singer and the listener take throughout the song is characterized as "forever teetering on the brink of lucidity," because while the images are vivid, together they are surreal, and the meaning behind them is therefore elusive (Newman). As the listener separated from the goings on in the song world, we do not know what the visions are, we just know they are all that remain, so we have to simply accept the "totality of the picture" (Attwood, "Visions"). As Ed Newman explains, the only thing that is not elusive in "Visions of Johanna" is "the manner in which Dylan sings and its overall effect that is mesmerizing and masterful." Mesmerizing and masterful are ideal descriptors, because "Visions of Johanna" is indicative of Dylan perfecting his own brand of visionary poetics. The world depicted in "Visions of Johanna" is representative of that in the remainder of the album and reflective of the uncertain war-torn social reality at the time: it is a cold, dark world of isolation and dislocation. The singer, Louise, and Little Boy Lost, who are examples of anti-establishment youths in the political landscape of the mid-1960s, as they cannot properly express themselves, and they do not understand their own emotions. They are lost in a series of visions, yet, they are in search of a more hopeful reality, a more purposeful way of being, and a more concrete means of communicating with one another. How appropriate for 1960's America.

Dylan's vision music, his visionary poetics, treats Rimbaud and the architects of the New Vision as models. While Dylan once quipped that his vision music is actually mathematical music, Hampton clarifies eloquently that Dylan's vision music

> involved an entire recalibration of his use of imagery, his relationship to language, his self-description, even the tempo of his performance[…]as visionary poetics expands the songwriting palette it also imposes scenarios in which the narrative self is immobilized, limited in its ethical reach, forced to reflect on the processes of creation—on the rearrangement of faces. (Dylan qtd. in Gleason; Hampton, "Absolutely" 23)

He rearranges his own "eye"—"it is as if I am speaking somebody's eye that I faintly remember"—through the Rimbaudian process of self-study and self-fashioning, in order to move his audience, the mouths, and "long live the mouths" (Dylan, Liner…*Highway*). As dictated by Rimbaud and the New Vision, this process was initiated by a deep dive into Dylan's own psyche, continues with various descriptions of the frank and nightmarish vision of mainstream society, and culminates with, as we see in "Visions of Johanna," an acknowledgement of the chaos of being "'absolument moderne' and underscores the writer's limited power over images" (Hampton, "Absolutely" 21). As previously mentioned, Dylan's visionary period was interrupted by his motorcycle accident and ensuing reclusive period that produced albums like *John Wesley Harding*, whose sepia tone album cover, shorter songs, and unique blending of the American West and the Hebrew Bible starkly distinguishes it from his 1964-1966 catalogue. Moreover, *John Wesley Harding* provides catharsis for its characters—heroes like those in "All Along the Watchtower"—which was unattainable for the singer of "Visions of Johanna," which is partly because the *I* becomes someone else (22). Once again, Dylan put on another mask and entered into another period of self-transformation a la Rimbaud. Nonetheless, as Dylan's folk songs functioned as appropriate vehicles of protest in the early 1960s and the visionary albums provided the counterculture

with a method of protest for their own metamorphosed sociocultural climate as well as a blueprint towards liberation, *John Wesley Harding* and its successor *Nashville Skyline* have their own purposes as well. Eventually, Dylan returned to the visionary mode with *Blood on the Tracks*, because, as he once explained, "I write inside out and sometimes the dimensions cross" (qtd. in Heylin 314).

"Work Me, Lord": Janis Joplin's Kozmic Blues

I.

If I say, "Janis Joplin" to you, I anticipate that you would either instinctively hear her intoxicating, raspy cackle or one of her striking, soulful screeches like that in "Cry Baby." Or perhaps you would envision her wailing into the microphone in one of her iconic outfits. Maybe your mind connects the "Janis Joplin" to her FM radio hits—"Piece of my Heart," "Summertime" —or, more vaguely still, perhaps Joplin signifies the "twenty-seven club," heroin, or the hippies' social revolution for you. In her biography of the eccentric, Texan rock star, Myra Friedman (Joplin's publicist) explains that the 1960s was a formative decade for this country's creative identity, calling it a "glorious time" for popular music and saying it "brought to flower a prideful, inspired, authentic American art form" (xiii). She further asserts that while "Jimi Hendrix was its most brilliant musician, the talent of Janis Joplin was its gorgeous light" (xiii).

Even before Joplin took the San Francisco scene by storm, people began speaking about her in terms of her energy, which they often described as electric. Her friend Jim Langdon said of her performances in Austin that she "literally electrified her audience with her powerful, soul-searching blues presentation" (qtd. in L. Joplin 140). Once Joplin had spread her energy outside of the Lone Star State to Haight-Ashbury, where she helped inaugurate the hippie's social revolution—their "conspiracy of reality"—she electrified her bandmates and their audiences (L. Joplin 196). James Gurley, guitarist for her first band Big

Brother and the Holding Company said, "Performing with Janis was an adrenaline-raising thing. I would never be able to go to sleep till past the dawn" (qtd. in L. Joplin 232). Singer Diane Lotny described her as a "snapped cable in an electric storm that does the snake, whipping around unleashed. She could get you to *move*" (qtd. in Friedman xxvii). Similarly, the title of a 1969 *The New Yorker* article reads, "Janis Joplin's Electric Energy," and in David Dalton's *Janis*, he pinpoints Joplin's electricity to her voice, dubbing her the first "cordless woman" with an "electric larynx" (Willis; Dalton 3). I am intrigued not only by the weight of Joplin's presence in our cultural imagination, but also by these descriptors of Joplin in terms of electricity: "gorgeous *light*," and by Friedman's firsthand assertion that "Janis seemed to *channel* emotions for other people" (my emphasis) (Friedman xiii, xix).

Ultimately, what piques my interest is that forty-eight years after her untimely death, Joplin's electricity extends beyond the deep cuts of wax on albums like *Big Brother and the Holding Company* and *Pearl*, beyond recorded renderings of her concert performances on special concert albums and DVDs and in documentaries like *Janis: Little Girl Blue*, and beyond YouTube videos of her charming Dick Cavett on his talk show. Joplin, still, is a live wire in our cultural imagination. She was conscious of this electricity, as she once explained,

> I do believe in some very amorphous things that happen when you're onstage…like something moves in the air. It seems like a real thing that moves around in the air. It's nonexistent but it's so real like love or desire. You know damn well it's there, you know it's RIGHT THERE, man—something's going on. (J. Joplin qtd. in L. Joplin 232)

Joplin herself was electrified by her own raw emotionalism, which often resulted in her state of ecstasy onstage that was "multiplied by the whole audience" (248). From the beginning of the revolutionary movement, she was simultaneously a source and a conductor of the flower children's electric energy. As an anonymous fan expressed, "She's not a star, she's us. I've

never met her but I know her. It's like, hearing her, you leave your body and you just move, man. She's just all energy" (qtd. in L. Joplin 232). With all this talk about Joplin harnessing the hippies' electricity by channeling the emotions of her audience, I cannot help but think of her in terms of electric Romanticism, albeit differently than others. This chapter demonstrates that like the more traditional blues before her, Joplin's soulful white blues, her "kozmic blues" is similar to Romantic poetry, as it is charged with radical praxis; it is an unwaveringly personal music that conveys much about Joplin emotionally, and in turn, the sociocultural climate of the flower children in the mid- to late-1960s (Guralnick 9). The radical aspect here lies in her performances, because instead of merely using the language of electricity or utilizing technological tools to more synchronously capture immediacy, Joplin *embodies* electric Romanticism, such that her spontaneous reaction to her audience is an essential aspect of her performances.

In Hélène Cixous' "The Laugh of the Medusa," she urges women to write, to invent a "*new insurgent* writing" that returns to the body in a radical effort to normalize female bodies, to de-censor women's sexual nature so that they are no longer "the uncanny stranger on display" (880). By writing her self, by making her body heard, Cixous avows that "our naphtha will spread," "immense resources of the unconscious [will] spring forth," and women could then co-opt the relationship between their bodies and sexuality; "hence her shattering entry into history, which has always been based *on her suppression*" (880). She later discusses the importance of public speaking and song, as she highlights the "privileged relationship with the voice," the power that voice and song have of moving us. She explains that because of our shared patriarchal history, for men, there is no division between the logic of oral speech and the logic of the text; conversely, there is scission when women assert their

voices publicly, such that women must "*inscrib*[*e*]" their bodies into their oral performances, as speech is "governed by the phallus" (Cixous 881). This is precisely what Joplin does. By inscribing her body into her oral performances, she shatters her entry into history and thereby spreads the hippie naphtha. Joplin's performances—recorded but particularly live on stage—are representative of that insurgence not only historically but on the lineage of the Romantic artists thus far analyzed. Her electric energy still persists in soundwaves and in our collective memory because she fused feminism with electric Romanticism. She unapologetically bridged the gap between body and sexuality while channeling her audience's emotions, which then informed her performance in real-time; and this loop is contingent upon synchronous spontaneity.

II.

Friedman's remarks that Joplin was the 1960's social revolution's "gorgeous light" and that "Janis seemed to channel emotions for other people," prompt me to consider Joplin and her electric energy in terms of her position as a Romantic hero (xiii, xix). Like Thomas Chatterton who is arguably the first in a long lineage, Romantic heroes are secularized Christ figures. They are unconventional outcasts who reject societal norms, and in turn, are somehow rejected by society. They are sensitive artists whose noble art is only understood in the eyes of a select few. While her sister Laura Joplin never uses the term "Romantic hero" in her part-epistolary biography, *Love, Janis*, she circles around the concept: "To be an artist was to interpret experiences for others. The more a person tuned in to the charismatic forces in life or in a piece of art, the more that person lived the ecstasy of energy we call life" (L. Joplin 119). A central aspect of Joplin's ability to "interpret experiences for others" is that her art and her life were one and the same, and her experience as a social

rebel inspired other nonconformists, those who flocked to Haight-Ashbury in the early days of the movement and those who dotted the Nation. In fact, not until shortly before her tragic overdose did she begin to separate her onstage persona, the caricature Janis Joplin, with her offstage identity she nicknamed Pearl.

The outcast characteristic of the Romantic hero is what enables their innate ability to be, as Ezra Pound says, "the antennae of the race," or more colloquially, the canary in the coal mine. Their separation from the mainstream helps the artist comment upon society clearly and without as much bias as someone situated within it (Pound 630). Joplin co-opted her position as social outcast by shifting her status to social rebel. She was emboldened by her loyal adherence to Jack Kerouac's own snubbing of mainstream society as featured in Beat novels such as *On the Road*, which she considered her "map for finding life" (L. Joplin 115). Her self-imposed status as social rebel, in addition to the tragedy of her dying so young, figure powerfully into Joplin's status as Romantic hero. Her life reads like a myth, which she added to liberally, particularly in 1968 and 1969 when she was just as liberal with her alcohol and heroin intake. And her untimely death at the unripe age of twenty-seven adds to the myth and preserves her as an archetypal flower child and Romantic hero of the 1960s. Joplin remains the smiling, laughing, crowd-seducing, long-haired young lady singing from the depths of her soul, forever draped in hippie rags, ceremonial beads and feathers, and big ole sunglasses.

Nonetheless, Romantic hero does not *entirely* represent the force of Joplin's energy, so I extend the Romantic connection by positing that rather than merely perform electric Romanticism, she embodies it. She functions figuratively as the 1960's æolian harp; as the way she performed is inherently a hippie expression. Recall that in traditional Romanticism,

the æolian harp is an image conjured by Romantic poets like Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Percy Bysshe Shelley to denote an intellectual, inspiring breeze that flows through poets when they write. Therefore, as expounded upon in my Overture, the æolian harp is a Romantic metaphor for poets engaging with spontaneity, or as Victor Cousin referred to that mental faculty, spontaneous reason. According to Shelley, the poet is like an æolian harp who is passively played upon by "external and internal impressions," which evokes the poet's art (Shelley). Similarly, Ralph Waldo Emerson connected the æolian harp with feelings of abandon and release. While he did not otherwise care for music, he owned an æolian harp that he enjoyed listening to because it "could catch the sad and triumphant melodies of nature" (Emerson qtd. in Matteson 5). He subscribed to the Shelleyan passivity of the poet as the æolian harp who waits for the wind to play across its strings, but Emerson insisted that the passive experience requires some action in preparation, as the poet must "tighten up his [*sic*] intellectual strings" (Matteson 5). Once the poet prepared herself, Emerson maintained that inspired poetry would emerge, as poetry is the harmonious result of the poet's readiness for the "cosmic breath" (Emerson, "The Harp" 69). "Cosmic breath" is instrumental, because, as he explains throughout his essay *The Poet*, the poet "ceases to have primary value as an individual" as soon as she poetically provides access through her subjectivity to universal consciousness (Beachy-Quick 43). When the cosmic breath breathes through the poet, she creates on behalf of the collective.

The spiritual overtones that are so vibrant in Emerson's treatment of the æolian harp are reflected in Thoreau's electric version, that telegraph wire he fixated on in his 1851 journal entries. As stated in my Overture, Thoreau's telegraph wire is the electric rendering of the Romantic æolian harp, with which he inaugurated an electric Romanticism that

continues with rock music in the 1960s. This continuity of Romanticism well into the twentieth century resonates with André Breton's perspective that "Romanticism asserts itself as a *continuum*," and Friedrich Schiller's notion that Romanticism is essentially a democratic artistic mode that "construct[s] emancipatory visions out of materials at hand" (Breton qtd. in Carr and Robinson 2; Schiller qtd. in Carr and Robinson 8). As pockets of youth began to rebel against the status quo in the 1960s, they craved an art form that represented them and that corresponded with their brand of social antagonism. The folk music of the early 1960s had previously "allowed youth to anchor their current experience within a context of the past" while "deliver[ing] a true *picture* of human drama" (L. Joplin 103). However, with the aid from musicians such as Bob Dylan, folk was soon replaced by the "new rock, with its psychedelic influence, [which] promised a way to confront the audience with a sensory *experience* of reality" (153). Joplin, who previously thought that folk was the answer, took a cue from Dylan's shift to visionary rock in 1965 and she too turned away from folk to a blues-based psychedelic rock.

The blues—which is a form of folk poetry—lends itself to the sort of emotional expression Joplin craved that is Romantic at its core. As David Emblidge explains in his article, "I Feel, Therefore I am: The Blues-Rock of Janis Joplin"[108]: "The blues is a refreshing experience. It organizes a difficult emotional problem and treats it in an aesthetic form not only beautiful in itself but providing numerous valuable opportunities to release pent-up energy" (348). Joplin released a whole range of emotions onstage that enraptured her audience, an audience that was made up of fellow outcasts and rebels who were as confused

[108] Embridge's "I feel therefore I am" references Maine de Biran's *volo ergo sum* (I desire therefore I am), which encapsulates an important shift in consciousness from the Enlightenment's "I think therefore I am" to the Romantic Age that refocuses to an individual's interior landscape.

and frustrated as she was (L. Joplin 103, 127). She used her voice and her body just as her bandmates used their instruments: as inherent hippie expressions. Her melodic unity was always inflected by "frenetic ornamentation," and therefore contained a "haunting feeling of always approaching the point of where something would break" (Emblidge 350). Therefore, sonically, her voice metaphorized the sociopolitical climate, which was on the verge of breaking. Like Kerouac, Joplin was drawn to Black culture, which in her opinion was more authentic. Consequently, old-time black blues singers were compelling to Joplin, because "They hit her with the experience of social oppression described in Kerouac's books" and further encouraged her to "break out of the stereotypical limits of her white world, to move beyond race and meet the poetic hearts and minds of the black culture" (L. Joplin 61). It is essential to note that this movement, while inspired by the Beat idealization of Black culture, is made possible by her white privilege.

By the time she joined Big Brother and the Holding Company in 1966, she had honed her stage presence and was ready to provide her audience with "a sensory *experience* of reality" (153). Her brand of blues-based psychedelic rock is Romantic in nature and I further argue that as the social revolution was materializing, she functions similar to an æolian harp for the burgeoning hippie movement. I root this notion in the fact that the very genre of psychedelic rock, and particularly Joplin's brand of it, builds upon "a feedback loop that evoked new responses" on the part of the performer *and* the audience. She liked and responded musically to fans' dancing, clapping, stomping, singing, and other displays that showed that the music moved them (306). Joplin "depended upon the spontaneous reactions in the audience," and she used that feedback loop to simultaneously exude emotion and imbibe the audience's emotion (154).

Beyond technical competence, Joplin's performance art hinges on the communication of emotions and therefore engages with spontaneity in a different way than the electric Romantics before her, because a central aspect of her art draws on the spontaneous reactions from her audience. Spontaneity like that enacted in Joplin's performances became a religion for the hippies because it enacted the withdrawal from ordered and logical culture into a reality that revolves around the present and wishes to, in Ram Dass' terms, "Be here now" (L. Joplin 154). Not only does this spontaneity harken back to the Romantic poets' conceptions of the æolian harp, but it is emblematic of Romantic radical praxis, which is deployed by the subjects of the previous chapters. Joplin was inspired by Beat writers like Kerouac who "reduced life to its essential in order to feel alive again" (52). She did so by helping to inaugurate the hippies' social revolution by responding with her kozmic blues to "the hypocritical social structure, the banality of school, the boring town, and prudish sexual values" (59). Over the years, Joplin defined kozmic blues as the fusion of a female blues sensibility into 1960's psychedelic rock, to which I stress electric and spontaneous components, because there is no kozmic blues without the plugged-in musical accompaniment as well as the spontaneous feedback loop between Joplin and her audience.

Joplin's musical performances were sites of Romantic radical praxis, because in deploying her emotion—rage, contempt, love, fear, immense sadness—her "I" speaks for all. In Dan Beachy-Quick's discussion on the topic of Romantic radical praxis, he explains that Romantic urgency produces art that not only records experience, but "shows how experience experiences itself, and does so not [necessarily] as an intellectual gesture," but as a personal revelation: "The poet places herself in this crisis of herself, a crisis in the poem

actualizes, conjures into a world, makes real even as it undermines its own reality" (Beachy-Quick 32, 34). Joplin's performances are personal revelations for the artists and audience alike, because they make their own reality as they undermine the reality around them. Joplin's way of responding to the conformist, mainstream society was by embracing art as "a way [she] interacted with the world" (43). Joplin boldly and unapologetically let her "freak flag fly," which profoundly resonated with her audiences (The Jimi). By "showing how experience experiences itself" for her own personal revelation and by channeling the audience's emotions through the feedback loop, she generated sites of Romantic radical praxis, her live performances, that combatted and undermined square society (Beachy-Quick 32). Like the æolian harp—an image that concurrently represents the poet in process as well as the dichotomous wildness and order of Nature—the "cosmic breath" moved through Joplin when she performed her kozmic blues (Emerson, "The Harp" 69).

III.

Joplin was a nonconformist whose eccentricities—which were bolstered and shaped by the Beat literature she read, unconventional ideas circulated in her outcasts-turned-rebels friend group, and the blues she listened to—disrupted the status quo in small, oil refinery-dotted Port Arthur, Texas. For instance, her sister Laura explains that their town had an organized KKK chapter, but Joplin, who had espoused Kerouacian "ideals of the poor black man's higher morality," was always vehemently against segregation, and therefore mocked by her peers for being a "N*gger lover" (slur redacted by me) (L. Joplin 56). As a teenager, she adopted a beatnik style that made manifest her eccentricities, which ranged from reading preferences to ideas to attitude. In terms of music, she always had a penchant for singing but it was not until she was a teenager and sang a near perfect interpretation of Odetta (Holmes)

for her fellow intellectual, rebel friends that she realized her talent (L. Joplin 62). She idolized Dylan and after she realized her singing talent, she sang folk-blues, mostly in Austin, Texas, and then at Bay Area and Monterey hootenannies when she first moved to the San Francisco in 1963. Eventually, the blues entirely replaced folk in her repertoire. The blues was a medium by which she could *truly* express herself, express her deepest feelings, which were abundant especially considering the rejection she experienced by her peers when she only ever pined for acceptance (104). The fact that the blues is a Romantic vehicle that expresses emotion to "perform a redemptive function" was of utmost importance for Joplin (Thomas 297).

Emotional expression, which is what the blues is rooted in, is a central concept to Joplin's musicianship. She once explained to a reporter that music allows her to "experience all kinds of things…feel things that are in your imagination," because music is "created from and, as it's happening, creates feelings" (J. Joplin qtd. in Berg). Her insight sounds much like Romantic praxis, which is founded upon the individual's experience, and she uses her imagination to translate her experience for her audience. Her last comment about how music is "created from and as it's happening creates feelings" parallels the Romantic urgency of poetry not only as recording experience but "show[ing] how experience experiences itself, and does so not as an intellectual gesture but as a personal one" (Beachy-Quick 32). Essentially, what Joplin explains in the quote above that is so fundamental to Romanticism is the exploration of the space between *I think* and *I am*, to reveal "how experience is experienced" (35). This is why Maine de Biran's *volo ergo sum* (I desire therefore I am) replaced the Enlightenment's "I think therefor I am" in the Romantic era, because for Romantics, *I desire* or *I feel* happens before *I think*. In terms of Romantic poetics, one feels

and only then thinks about how she feels. Joplin reveals how experience is experienced in part by embracing the spontaneity essential to the blues idiom to penetrate the audience's emotional plane. Furthermore, Joplin's blues style carried with it what Mathes Carter refers to the "cultural politics of black sound," which I expounded upon in my chapter on Kerouac and further address below, such that she simultaneously performed an act of rebellion against white Anglo culture and expressed the pain she otherwise kept suppressed inside, thanks to a generous amount of alcohol and heroin she turned to for desensitization purposes (Carter 13; L. Joplin 104).

IV.

Joplin's singing career reached new heights when she joined Big Brother and the Holding Company in 1966. The band formed independently of Joplin in 1965 and it remains one of the best examples of the 1960's San Francisco psychedelic rock scene, along with the Grateful Dead, Quicksilver Messenger Service, and Jefferson Airplane (147). On June 10, 1966, a mere six days after returning back to San Francisco (after a stint back in Texas), Joplin joined them on stage as their lead singer, a role she would retain until she went solo in 1969 (148). One of the songs they performed that night was "Turtle Blues," a Joplin original. The song is autobiographical. Like most of what she wrote, it is a poetic expression of her deep pain prompted by being a social outcast-turned-rebel. In Cixous' words, this performance marked Joplin's arrival, "vibrant, over and again" at the beginning of her new history, blending personal history and blues tropes to represent the history of women in general (882). While she had not yet coined "kozmic blues," the song is emblematic of this genre, which is uniquely Joplin's. The use of a natural image like the turtle is a blues trope used by singers like Robert Johnson and Blind Lemon Jefferson. Joplin draws from other

blues conventions used by male performers, as she sings that she is a "mean, mean woman" and an "evil woman," and repeats these phrases "working some subtle but striking variation each time around," which is a blues convention (Big Brother, "Turtle"; Embridge 344). However, she further explains that she is okay with these blues-based epithets because she has been "called much worser [*sic*] things" (Big Brother, "Turtle"). Her expression of her nonconformity—such as not being the sort of woman who is a glorified dishwasher, but instead one who endorses her partner's desire to go out drinking, as long he invites her along—is mimicked by Gurley's use of distortion with his electric guitar ("Turtle"). She co-opts phrases and conventions of male objectification and classification of women in the blues, and she therefore makes her body heard in her insurgent artistic expression. She intensifies the weight of her lyrics with the power of her voice that moves her audience.

"Turtle Blues" reminds me of Coleridge's "Dejection: An Ode": in Joplin's version, she compares herself to a turtle who is protected by its hard shell against life's suffering, and in Coleridge's, the poet is similarly separated from his pain, as it has calloused over to yield numbness. He "…gaz[es] on the western sky, / And its peculiar ting of yellow green," which he suspects may evoke emotion, yet "And still I gaze—and with how blank an eye!" (II.8-9, 10). Joplin experiences similar numbness. In the album version of Joplin's song, she intermittently laughs amid the lyrics that undoubtedly stem from a deep-rooted pain, and her detachment from the pain reminds me of Coleridge's lines, "A grief without a pang, void, dark, and drear, / A stifled, drowsy, unimpassioned grief" (II.1-2). Both Joplin and Coleridge are dejected by the realities of life's suffering, but they are accustomed to these feelings. When Coleridge looks out at the Western sky, he may as well be singing Joplin's line, "I know this goddamned life too well" (Big Brother, "Turtle"). Coleridge's conclusion to the

lady he addresses—Sara Hutchinson, whom he hopelessly loved even though he was married to another Sara—is that the sky's beauty cannot enkindle his emotions, because emotions must come from within. Hutchinson, the "pure of heart," already knows "What this strong music in the soul may be," an awareness that causes Coleridge to draw a connection between the soul's inner music and Nature (Coleridge, "Dejection" V.2). As a result, he realizes

> A new Earth and new Heaven,
> Undreamt of by the sensual and the proud—
> Joy is the sweet voice, Joy the luminous cloud—
> We in ourselves rejoice! (V.11-14)

The catalyst to this realization is the "scream / Of agony by torture lengthened out / That lute sent forth!" (VII.4-6). The lute refers back to the æolian harp he speaks of earlier in the poem.

In the first stanza, the speaker witnesses a "tranquil" night and wishes for a storm that might remedy his dull feelings. The wind picks up and "Upon the strings of this Æolian lute," the "dull sobbing draft…moans and rakes," which represent his dejected feelings (I.7, 6). Coleridge's imagination is triggered by the sounds emanating from the æolian harp, which prompt him to begin working through his calloused feelings, such that he ultimately realizes that finding the music in his own soul paves the road to joy. Joplin never goes that far. Tragically, she is incapable of seeing past her protective hardened shell—which began to solidify in Port Arthur—that distances her enough to allow a sense of humor about her emotional state, but simultaneously inhibits her from accessing true joy. Reaching into the depths of her soul to find the inner music was an essential aspect of her art, as Big Brother and the Holding Company's drummer Dave Getz said of Joplin, "she was in touch with her emotions[…]in some way that nobody else I knew was in touch with" (qtd. in Berg). However, instead of her ultimately finding joy like the speaker in Coleridge's poem, Joplin

would come offstage and require escapist, dulling substances like alcohol or heroin to balance out the high from performing and connecting emotionally with other people, about which Getz explained, "to be like that is the price you pay for doing that art at that level" (qtd. in Berg).

V.

Just as the æolian harp that emits harmonic sounds as the winds pass over it, Joplin's songs represent not only her emotion, but the emotion from all the social outcasts, the freaks, the flower children. As previously highlighted, Joplin "channel[ed] emotions for other people," and she does so by fusing a female blues sensibility to 1960's psychedelic rock, a fusion she referred to as kozmic blues (Friedman xix). In 1969, she released her first solo album, *I Got Dem Ol' Kozmic Blues Again Mama!* that features one of the only songs co-written by her, "Kozmic Blues." Her sister Laura explains that the term kozmic blues is "a true Joplinesque missile" that derives from Joplin's "real angst of worrying about death" and the "sophisticated twist of misspelling *cosmic*" (254). I cannot help but hear "kozmic blues" and think of the connotation of the Emersonian "cosmic breath" that moves through the æolian harp, which is surely an unintended coincidence that, nonetheless, is evocative. Joplin defined kozmic blues while showcasing a sensitivity that she was a white woman using a Black expression:

> I don't know if this is grossly insensitive of me, and it may well be, but like the black man's blues is based on the have not. I got the blues because I don't have my baby, I got the blues because I don't have the quarter for a bottle of wine, I got the blues because they won't let me stay in the bar. Well you know I'm a middle class white chick from a family that would love to send me to college and I didn't wanna. I had a job, I didn't dig it, I had it real easy and then one day I realized it in a flash sitting in a bar, that it wasn't an uphill incline that one day was going to be all right, it was your whole life. You'd never touch that fucking carrot, man, that's what the Kozmic Blues are. (Janis Joplin qtd. in Embridge 343)

I contend that even before going solo and coining the term kozmic blues, this had always been her genre. She always had the kozmic blues, back in Port Arthur and especially when she became successful and realized that success solved none of her most vexing problems. Early on, she anchored herself to the blues tradition, which her psychedelic rock is inspired by and consistently references.

Joplin loyally subscribed to the blues style and she considered herself the first "black-white" person, which is problematic for a post-hippie, more racially conscious modern mindset, but nonetheless denotes her "*internal* self-integration, to quit just being white…to become all the good things from all heritages" (L. Joplin 124). However distasteful the term may seem, it is important to remember that this "black-white" self-imposed identity exemplifies the peace and love mentality that was quintessential to the hippies' social revolution. Furthermore, Joplin's insistence of being the first "black-white" is emblematic of Cixous' assertion that a woman's writing—in this case, her singing—is "militant" because "she is an integral part of all liberations[…]she will bring about a mutation in human relations, in thought, in all praxis" (Cixous 882). Expressing her own struggle in her blues-based music is therefore that radical praxis I mentioned earlier which represents Romantic poetry. Joplin's performances were sites of liberation. She was the "voice of a Lady Leadbelly" situated in hippie Camelot (*New York Free Press* qtd. in L. Joplin 220). As with more traditional blues, essential to Joplin's kozmic blues is the intersection between music and social memory; because performing the blues, as Paul Allen Anderson explains,

> provided especially haunting and portable sites for the staging of social memory. In the case of music—which may be the expressive form most frequently associated with experiences of spirit possession, contemplative reverie, and wistful or violent nostalgia—our most striking experiences often take place at moments of half-understood hauntedness. (4)

Joplin's kozmic brand of the blues sung by Black women before her, such as Bessie Smith, Billie Holiday, and so many other blues powerhouses, is imbued with their pain, with her own pain, and with the pain of her audience. Joplin's boyfriend David Niehaus remarked,

> I realized when she sang me all these songs, they were always the blues. And that's what she felt, basically, were the blues. She could feel everybody's pain, and that's one of the reasons she did heroin was so she didn't have to be involved with everybody else's life. Most people can be oblivious to what going on around them, but Janis couldn't, she couldn't block it out. (qtd. in Berg)

Inherent to Joplin was her ability to "feel everybody's pain" and to "channel emotions for other people," which is the kind of art that requires a tremendous amount of inner fortitude that she just did not have (Friedman xix). Recall Wordsworth's famous concept of poetry as "emotion recollected in tranquility," which is like a faucet Joplin was incapable of turning off without heroin. Instead, she fully embraced her empathic power and positioned herself as the hippie æolian harp, the "trance enhancer [who] brought total commitment to her music…pieces of her soul seemed to dance along the harmonies and ride the tidal waves of sound that defined her voice" (L. Joplin 153).

Moreover, Joplin's kozmic blues—like the more traditional blues before it—provided "energizing site[s] of utopian anticipation," which is a central aspect of the hippie counterculture (Anderson 5). In *Deep River: Music and Memory in Harlem Renaissance Thought*, Paul Allen Anderson reports that W. E. B. Du Bois' early Black nationalist thought called for Black liberation, which he believed entailed the literary elevation of sorrow songs, elsewhere referred to as spirituals (5). Spirituals were "not only a haunted site of memory but [also] an energizing site of utopian anticipation," as they originate with the bleak experience of slavery (5). Slaves' field hollers and groans that morphed into spirituals (Jones 28). Carter characterizes spirituals as containing the "sonic dimensions of failed promise of

reconstruction"; in other words, this genre of music is imbued with the slaves' hope of the eradication of slavery, of racial equality (Carter 11). As spirituals developed into the blues, the music evolved as "a proletariat art form rich in political implications" (Anderson 9). The blues represents "a sonic tableau" featuring resistance (Carter 15). As I have noted throughout, I am hyper-aware of the racially complicated overtones in white artists taking inspiration from Black art, but nonetheless, just as Kerouac draws from bebop, a freedom sound, psychedelic rock, especially Joplin's pulls from the blues. Joplin's kozmic blues music grafts the concept of utopian anticipation from its musical forebear onto the hippie counterculture, which is marked by a general enthusiasm for personal and social change (Goffman and Joy 32). For the most part, the hippie counterculture Joplin was a part of is characterized by peaceful resistance against the oppressors; apart from the senseless violence at the hands of the Hells Angels and other peripheral examples, emblematic of the movement is the image of a flower in a rifle.

As previously mentioned, Joplin endeavored to rebel against the very culture that cast her a social Other. For Joplin in 1940-1950's small-town Texas, this meant absorbing all the blues she could, such that her artistic expression binds her to the oral/aural tradition that is so fundamental to the Black American experience. As Beat poet and Black Arts Movement pioneer LeRoi Jones (Amiri Baraka) explains, the blues contains aspects of African music, which uses "rhythmic…polyphonic, neglect of harmony and melody," which is precisely why a white culture that was used to harmony- and melody-based European music could not appreciate it (Jones 25). Creatively, she mimicked her favorite visual artist, Modigliani, "who revolutionized the art world with his eerie fluid figure that showed a forceful African influence" (L. Joplin 75). What our contemporary culture may castigate as

appropriation was a survival technique to use the blues idiom that is founded on emotion and improvisation that helps people "cope with disjuncture and chance" in the face of "the rootlessness and the discontinuity so characteristic of human existence" (Murray 113). Joplin felt an affiliation with the spirit of the blues and with the stories about blues singers. Behaviorally, Joplin emulated female blues singers' lifestyles even when she was a teenager. Laura reports that her sister often referred to herself as "a candle, burning on both ends," and frequently told her friends that she would die young (L. Joplin 125). Laura posits that Joplin's excessive drinking was inspired by Billie Holiday's life choices delineated in her 1956 autobiography *Lady Sings the Blues*, about the "spontaneous and emotional singer who turned her tragic life into music that moved her audiences" and the alcoholism and heroin addiction that came with it. Joplin's friend, Linda Gravenites, believed that Joplin was a reincarnation of Bessie Smith (126). Musically, Joplin engaged in the blues-based "righteous and dangerous experiment" of releasing her "feelings from years of bondage" and channeling her audience's emotions as well (127).

VI.

At the dawn of the Summer of Love in 1967, with their self-titled 1966 record under their belts, Big Brother and the Holding company played the famous Monterey Pop Festival, which would provide them with national recognition. Their lineup included songs like "Down on Me" and "Harry," but it is their set closer on both nights, "Ball and Chain," that struck awe into the audience. Upon Joplin's insistence against the advice from their manager at the time, Chet Helms, D. A. Pennebaker's crew captured Big Brother's second performance, which showcases Joplin clad in a cream outfit whose golden threads glitter as she kicks to the rhythm section's beat. First, in "Combination of the Two," Joplin knocks us

and rocks us as she compliments Sam Andrew's vocals and the band's heavier sound that weaves in and out of a psychedelic, progressive surf rock tune. It is not a blues song per se, but Joplin infuses it with a blues idiom, which consists of the parody of slaves' "cries, swoops, squawks, and slurs"; as Ed Denson once wrote in his column for *The Berkeley Barb*, Joplin's "ability to scream and throw her body into the music" is impressive (Jones 30; Ed Denson qtd. in L. Joplin 171). Not only is it impressive, but Joplin as background singer bridges the gap between her body and her sexuality with bravado. Her body is a central part of her performance art, as exemplified by her guttural singing and the way she moves her body and the güiro,[109] which functions as an extension of her body, to the music.

In their set closer, "Ball and Chain," she enlivens Big Mama Thornton's blues number. The performance exemplifies Joplin's mastery of the dialectical energy of the blues, as she expresses grief both in the loudest moments of excitement and those that are quieter and more sensual. In the third minute of the performance, Joplin leads the band into a climactic moment when she goes into a state of onstage ecstasy as she squeals and bellows, "I wanted to love you, love you, that's all I could do," and then screams a sonorous "yeaaaaaaah" seemingly from the depths of her soul (Big Brother, "Ball"). Her swell of emotion is complimented by Gurley's heavy guitar distortion, and suddenly the band dynamically takes it down low and we are back to the first verse, quiet, muted, and melancholy: "Sitting down by my window / Oh, looking out at the rain" ("Ball"). Peter Albin's bass guitar and Joplin's kozmic bluesy embodiment of the painful lyrics are aurally spotlighted as the camera cuts to Mama Cass (of the Mamas and the Papas) sitting on a grassy patch in front of the stage, mouth parted and awe-struck (Pennebaker). Joplin

[109] A Latin American percussive instrument that is played by scraping a stick along the wooden notches to produce a unique scratching-like sound.

presented her audience with a powerful blend of rock and blues that was predicated on feeling—their feelings, Joplin's feelings, Thornton's feelings, all the feelings.

VII.

In 1969, Joplin left Big Brother and the Holding company and ventured solo. She took Andrew with her to start the Kozmic Blues Band. Their 1969 release, *I Got Dem Ol' Kozmic Blues Again Mama!* features songs such "Little Girl Blue," in which she knowingly sings, "Baby, I know just how you feel" (J. Joplin, "Little"). In its title song, "Kozmic Blues," she sings as a soulful twenty-five-year-old who keeps "movin' on" along with time, but still, she falters:

> I keep pushing so hard the dream
> I keep tryin' to make it right
> Through another lonely day. ("Kozmic")

Her soulful singing in "Kozmic Blues," both the studio version and live versions, encapsulates her maxim, "My whole purpose is to communicate" her own experiences which align with others (J. Joplin qtd. in L. Joplin 293). Every rendition of the song I have heard displays what Friedman explains is Joplin's ability to "give to her audiences such overwhelming emotional might" (Friedman xviii).

The last song on the album, "Work Me, Lord," is a powerful song written by her friend Nick Gravenites. Throughout any rendition, Joplin improvises by referring to the Divine as "honey" and "Daddy," as she pleads for companionship here on this earthly plane (J. Joplin, "Work"). In the song, she asserts what others have since said about her, that companionship is all she ever wanted in life, as she believed being in a relationship would make her life easier. In her loneliness, she tries to live, and while she continues to move forward, "something is driving me, oh, back, / And something's trying to hold on me, / To

my way of life, why" (J. Joplin "Work"). Just as she does elsewhere, she exudes "knowledge of born pain, suffering and the scars of experience" (Langdon qtd. in L. Joplin 138). As with "Turtle Blues" and her performances of "Combination of the Two" and "Ball and Chain," "Work Me Lord" exemplifies that her kozmic blues is an embodied expression of electric Romanticism. However, here she adds another element, as she sings to and pleads with the Divine, confirming that the cosmic breath flows through her to generate her kozmic blues, which is clarified in the first line of the song, "Work me Lord, work me Lord" and iterated throughout (J. Joplin, "Work").

Linda Gravenites referred to her friend as "a thousand-watt light bulb going off" and Niehaus remarked that his girlfriend "was on fire. She had the power" (Gravenites qtd. in L. Joplin 191; Niehaus qtd. in L. Joplin 278). But, just as quickly as she was powered on——

VIII.

Since her overdose, which will be fifty years in October, the album she was working on during the time of her tragic mistake was posthumously released and titled *Pearl* after her off-stage, more genuine and less cartoonish persona. The day after she overdosed, she was scheduled to record lyrics to a song that was released as an instrumental titled "Buried Alive in the Blues," which is fitting for the situation. Many people interviewed since have claimed that her work on *Pearl* showcases the fact that she was working diligently to hone her craft and master her idiosyncratic vocalization. The hypothetical game is moot, however, because Joplin's art, which hinged on the immensely emotional feedback loop with the audience, was the "way [she] interacted with the world": "Janis thought her role as rock was really to guide her audience into feeling their innermost emotions[…]she sometimes felt like a prostitute, selling her heart, rather than her boys, to people who couldn't touch their own feelings and

so sucked off hers" (L. Joplin 43, 293-294). Her embodiment of electric Romanticism is why we remember her so vividly in our cultural memory and why people claimed she was the most important female musical artist, more important than Aretha Franklin, but it is also part of why she met such a hasty and tragic demise (Berg).

I am not sure about the claim that she is more important than Aretha, but I do agree that Joplin is one of the most important female artists in twentieth century America, as she was a leader of the countercultural hippie revolution that so altered American socioculturally. To use Cixous' terms, Joplin was an insurgent force on the music scene, which was largely coded as male. She was inspired by Beat literature and beatnik culture, which were also coded as male, and she extended the female blues tradition by powerhouses like Holiday to the white masses; in other words, she fulfills Cixous' claim, "our naphtha will spread" by "shattering [her] entry into history, which has always been based *on her suppression*" (880). By inscribing her body into her performances in a world that had been "governed by the phallus," her attempts helped the normalization of the women's sexuality, as she galvanized other women to be freer and more accepting of their bodies, sexuality, and emotion (881). The way she reached her audiences was with her embodiment of electric Romanticism; she was the conductor—the hippie æolian harp, if you will—for her audience's emotions, which she amplified with her own emotions in that feedback loop. As her sister admits, "Hers was not an independent sound," but "she knew what she wanted and she knew ahead of time what people around her wanted" (L. Joplin 306, 307-308). Joplin's reliance on her audience's clapping, stomping, and singing in tandem with her own finely-tuned emotional proficiency that she wielded in her blues-based psychedelic music—her kozmic blues—is what marks her as unique, both then and always.

Coda

"I said the soul of a nation been torn away

And it's beginning to go into a slow decay."

~Bob Dylan, "Murder Most Foul"

It is April of 2020 and, in most states, as well as in many countries, we are under a Stay-at-Home mandate or Shelter-in-Place order due to an unprecedented global pandemic. COVID-19 broke out and ran rampant in the Wuhan region of China, allegedly in December. President Donald Trump was briefed about the alarming nature of Coronavirus as well as what was happening in China as early as January, but even as the world witnessed Italy's meteoric deterioration in February, Trump declared to reporters and on Twitter—his favorite means of communication—that there was nothing to worry about (Kelly). He even confounded Americans as recently as late February, claiming the virus was a "new hoax" (qtd. in Peters). Several pro-Trump talking heads have rallied the Trumpster base into believing that the virus is a hoax conceived of by the Democrats to harm the sitting president's chances at reelection, or, more insidious yet, that it is biological warfare designed by the Chinese in collaboration with the Democrats to "stop the riots in Hong Kong" and "use it against Trump and get rid of older people which they have been trying to do for a while" (Anonymous Trumpsters qtd. Arnsdorf).

Considering globalization, the virus would have made it to the United States regardless of earlier action by the former reality TV star who sits in the White House

(making a mockery of the institution), but several credible sources claim that the state of affairs would not be as grave as it is now had Trump not stolen those precious several weeks from us by stonewalling instead of acting as per experts' advice (Pilkington and McCarthy). To date, he has yet to offer any condolences to victims or victims' families, nor has he provided the nation with any solace; instead, he has created false hope for treatments that experts report do not work for this novel virus, and, when asked directly what he would say to his sick and scared Americans, he sneered pettily, "I would say that you're a terrible reporter, that's what I would say" ("Trump"). The way he has (mis)handled the previous several weeks is representative of his tenure as president thus far. Without exaggeration, several of the events since his inauguration in 2017 sound like those out of dystopian fiction, the most alarming of which is the rhetoric he uses, which is reminiscent of Allen Ginsberg's concept of "Black Magic language" he repudiated in *Wichita Vortex Sutra*:

> The war is language,
> language abused
> for Advertisement,
> language used
> like magic for the power on the planet:
> Black Magic language,
> formulas for reality—. (409)

There is a cyclical nature to history, so Ginsberg's spontaneous poetical commentary against the "formulas for reality," the "language abused / for Advertisement" in the mid-1960s is relevant today in the era of 'fake news' and Twitter diplomacy (#Twiplomacy). As Ginsberg rode through the Midwest VW van looking like a hippie-prophet composite, his spontaneous call to action featured Walt Whitman's adhesiveness—the "effux of the soul"—as a remedy for the nation (Whitman, "Song" VII.1). The months and even years leading up to this pandemic show that we too need adhesiveness, as partisanship bolstered by the

twenty-four-hour news cycle and the phenomenon of social media has factionalized the nation and simultaneously promoted pockets of extreme nationalism on one side and dogmatic liberalism on the other.

Throughout the poem, Ginsberg references music he hears on the radio, which kindles in him hope that there exists another sort of linguistic spell that has the power to counter the black magic wielded by the media. Late in the night of March 26, 2020, Bob Dylan released his first original song since his 2012 album *The Tempest*. A few seconds short of seventeen minutes, "Murder Most Foul" is his longest song to date. It is a ballad Ben Burnell refers to as an "epic poem wrapped in a blockbuster" on a special edition of his podcast ("Special"). While Burnell claims it is not protest, I disagree. Its subject is the President John F. Kennedy's assassination, and it begins, "It was a dark day in Dallas, November '63 / A day that will live on in infamy" (Dylan, "Murder"). At the end of its first verse, Dylan follows up an obvious allusion to the conspiracy theories that demonstrate JFK was murdered by the government, "Greatest magic trick every under the sun / Perfectly executed, skillfully done," by invoking Wolfman Jack—"Wolfman, oh Wolfman, of Wolfman, howl"—who was an American disc jockey ("Murder"). In the beginning of the second verse, he alludes to the children's song, "Hush Little Baby" and then invokes the Beatles, "The Beatles are comin', they're gonna hold your hand" ("Murder"). What follows is Dylan's reference to seventy-four music artists, sometimes overtly ("Play it for Lindsey and Stevie Nicks" and "Play Art Pepper, Thelonious Monk / Charlie Parker and all that junk") and sometimes only obvious to those who are familiar with the references ("Wake up, little Susie, let's go for a drive" and "Tommy, can you hear me? I'm the Acid Queen") ("Murder"). Once again, Dylan is the voice of his generation, as he clearly sings to the Baby

Boomers (as well as those enamored by Boomer music), "Pick up the pieces and lower the flags / I'm goin' to Woodstock, it's the Aquarian Age" (Dylan, "Murder"). The title of the song itself is a reference to a 1964 film adaptation of an Agatha Christie novel, though Christie herself borrowed the title from Shakespeare.

So, how is Dylan's song about the sixties and seemingly for his generation a protest in today's 'quarantimes'? His narrated delivery of a "roll around twentieth cultural landscape" is a springboard to a world that is falling apart, which has been falling apart since what many refer to as the fall of Camelot, that "dark day in Dallas, November '63" ("Murder").[110] Dylan speaks-sings, "The day that they killed him, someone said to me, 'Son / The age of the Antichrist has only just begun'," which, like it or not, is sharply accurate commentary on how things have devolved to a pandemic under the custody of Trump—who, up until the debut of NBC's *The Apprentice* in 2004, Millennials recalled as the rich guy in *Home Alone 2: Lost in New York* who directs Kevin McCallister to the Plaza Hotel's lobby—and his son-in-law, Jared Kushner, real estate developer turned Senior Advisor to the President turned Coronavirus guru (as of April 3rd) ("Murder"). After remarking on the dawn of the "age of the Antichrist," he pronounces, "I said the soul of a nation been torn away / And it's beginning to go into a slow decay" ("Murder"). He poignantly warns us now as he did in the sixties.

As most everything Dylan does in his career, the timely release of this epic ballad is purposeful, which he hints to in the social media post that alerted followers about the Spotify release: "Greetings to my fans and followers with gratitude for all your support and

110 This style is illustrative of his performance style in the last few years, which causes many fans to believe the song is a recent recording, while others maintain that it was recorded during the *Tempest* sessions and just released now.

loyalty across the years. This is an unreleased song we recorded a while back that you might find interesting. Stay safe, stay observant and may God be with you. Bob Dylan" (@bobdylan). "[T]hat you might find interesting" functions as a subtle nod to the significance of the timing. It has been a slow devolution since JFK's assassination to the dystopic state of affairs now. In the song, Dylan juxtaposes the "age of the Antichrist" with "the Aquarian age"; the former characterizes the establishment and the latter is boosted by the catalogue of musical references, so as to remind his generation of and herald younger generations to the power of countercultural protest that uses music as a well-deployed tool against the establishment.

The week that Dylan released "Murder Most Foul," a meme circulated virally, which said something like, "If you think artists are useless, try spending your quarantine without music, books, poems, movies, and TV shows." This points to an overcurrent of my dissertation about counterculture as an event of electric Romanticism: art has power. Art has power to move people, and specifically, protest poetry has immense power to effect change. As I have shown in the second half of this dissertation, protest poetry certainly includes music; recall Dylan's claim that "Nowadays, lines that people remember are lines from songs, lyrics from songs" (*Rolling*). "Murder Most Foul" reminds us how music was one of the key aspects of the social revolution of the 1960s; music is where the youth turned to for solace and for action. Dylan, "the spokesman of his generation," who functions ostensibly as a modern prophet, used social media and the digital streaming service on March 26th to galvanize his followers, to rouse the nation to protest the current establishment, from President "You're fired" Trump, to Vice President Pence, who would have us all pray the

virus away, to the gross inequities of the stimulus package, to the appalling and perilous defunding of the Environmental Protection Agency, and the list goes on, maddeningly so.

Where the former presidential candidate Senator Bernie Sanders is right is that we do need a revolution. While I am not sure what a successful revolution in these modern times looks like, I agree with Dylan that we need music; however, the nation's collective auto-tuned, lip-synced fixation does not compare to the "energizing site[s] of utopian anticipation," such as the blues, bebop, and psychedelic rock (Anderson 5). We need another wave of electric Romanticism. We need music that is composed by engaging synchronously with the spontaneous in order to yoke body and soul again. We need to end our enslavement by the establishment and, as William Blake said, "Create a System." We need visionaries who will use the incredible technological tools like the Internet to create a modern version of flower power. We need to effect sociocultural and political change.

~STS

April 2020

Works Cited

"Aeolian harp." *Oxford English Dictionary*, www-oed-com.du.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/3106#eid9645343. Accessed 10 July 2019.

"Allen Ginsberg's LSD Poem to William Buckley." *YouTube*, uploaded by Metrazol Electricity, 27 Nov. 2010, www.youtube.com/watch?v=eKBAJYceQ54.

Anderson, Paul Allen. *Deep River: Music and Memory in Harlem Renaissance Thought*. Duke UP, 2001.

"Anima Mundi." *Oxford English Dictionary*, www-oed-com.du.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/7772?rskey=jQgtve&result=1&isAdvanced=true#firstMatch. Accessed 19 Jun. 2019.

Apesos, Anthony. "The Poet in the Poem: Blake's *Milton*." *Studies in Philology*, vol. 112, no. 2, 2015, pp. 329-413. www.jstor.org/stable/24392028.

Arnsdorf, Isaac. "Inside the Pro-Trump Facebook Group Where First Responders Call Coronavirus a Hoax." *ProPublica*, 17 Mar. 2020, www.propublica.org/article/facebook-firefighters-corona. Accessed 2 Apr. 2020.

Atkinson, Jay. "Bob Dylan's Lowell Show is More Than a Concert: It's a Requiem for Jack Kerouac." *Boston*, 18 Nov. 2019, www.bostonmagazine.com/arts-entertainment/2019/11/18/jack-kerouac-bob-dylan/?fbclid=IwAR2SbuKthj8woVkf7YV7YGl6rWFTW9mthoqS2CtBdiyGS6Ev0ZJsh9HMPrA. Accessed 19 Nov. 2019.

Attwood, Tony. "Bob Dylan's 'It's Alright Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)': The Masterpiece of the Era." *Untold Dylan*, 22 Feb. 2013, bob-dylan.org.uk/archives/106. Accessed 23 Jun. 2019.

- - - . "Bob Dylan's Maggie's Farm: 3 Very Different Versions; But Why Play It So Often?" *Untold Dylan*, 14 Dec. 2008, bob-dylan.org.uk/archives/38. Accessed 4 Jun. 2008.

- - -. "Lily, Rosemary, and the Jack of Hearts: The Meanings Behind Dylan's Songs." *Untold Dylan*, 13 Nov. 2017, bob-dylan.org.uk/archives/405. Accessed 25 Jun. 2019.

- - -. "Outlaw Blues, On the Road Again, and Bob Dylan's 115th Dream." *Untold Dylan,* 9 Apr. 2013, bob-dylan.org.uk/archives/260. Accessed 4 Jun. 2019.

- - -. "'Subterranean Homesick Blues': The Meaning of the Music and the Lyrics." *Untold Dylan*, 13 Oct. 2017, bob-dylan.org.uk/archives/31. Accessed 4 Jun. 2019.

- - -. "Visions of Johanna: The Meaning of the Music, the Lyrics and the Rewrites." *Untold Dylan*, 1 Nov. 2008, bob-dylan.org.uk/archives/7. Accessed 30 Nov. 2019.

Babuts, Nicolae. "Baudelaire and the Identity of the Self." *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal*, vol. 47, no. 3, 2014, pp. 159-173. www.jstor.org/stable/44029867

Bakke, Max. "'Telling All the Road': Re-Reading *On the Road* as New Journalism." *Beatdom*, vol. 15, 3 Dec. 2015, www.beatdom.com/telling-road-re-reading-road-new-journalism/.

Ball, Gordon, editor. "Reader's Guide: Biographical Note: The Decade Preceding These Journals." *Journals: Early Fifties Early Sixties.* Grove Press, 1977, pp. xiii-xxx.

Beachy-Quick, Dan. "The Oracular Tree Acquiring: On Romanticism as Radical Praxis." *Active Romanticism: The Radical Impulse in Nineteenth-Century and Contemporary Poetic Practice*, edited by Julie Carr and Jeffrey C. Robinson, Alabama UP, 2015, pp. 31-46.

Belgrad, Daniel. *The Culture of Spontaneity: Improvisation and the Arts in Postwar America.* Chicago UP, 1998.

Berg, Amy, director. *Janis: Little Girl Blue*. Performances by Cat Power and Janis Joplin, FilmRise, 2015.

Berlin, Isiah. *The Roots of Romanticism*. Princeton UP, 1999.

Big Brother and the Holding Company. "Ball and Chain." Written by Willie Mae Thornton, *Monterey International Pop Festival*, 1968.

- - -. "Turtle Blues." Written by Janis Joplin, *Cheap Thrills*, Columbia, 1968.

Blake, William. *Jerusalem. William Blake: The Complete Poems*, edited by Alicia Ostriker, Penguin, 1981, pp. 635-847.

- - -. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell. William Blake: The Complete Poems*, edited by Alicia Ostriker, Penguin, 1981, pp. 180-195.

- - -. "The Mental Traveler." *William Blake: The Complete Poems*, edited by Alicia Ostriker, Penguin, 1981, pp. 499-502.

- - -. "To Thomas Butts, 22 November 1802." *William Blake: The Complete Poems*, edited by Alicia Ostriker, Penguin, 1981, pp. 485-487.

@bobdylan. "Bob Dylan. Murder Most Foul. Link in bio." *Instagram*, 26 Mar. 2020, instagram.com/p/B-ORmWTDxVd/?igshid=1xof8183kjmtq.

Breton, André. "Manifesto of Surrealism." 1924. Translated by Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane, Michigan UP, 1969, pdfs.semanticscholar.org/aee1/6784d294ab9bd74b996a67b690fc307f61e0.pdf.

- - -. "What is Surrealism?: Lecture Delivered in Brussels by André Breton on the 1st June 1934." *Generation Online*, www.generation-online.org/c/fcsurrealism2.htm, accessed 20 Nov. 2019.

Burnell, Ben. "Highway 61 Revisited Part 2." *Bob Dylan: Album by Album* from Audioboom, 11 Aug. 2019, audioboom.com/posts/7338937-highway-61-revisited-part-2.

- - -. "Highway 61 Revisited Part 3. *Bob Dylan: Album by Album* from Audioboom, 18 Aug. 2019, audioboom.com/posts/7345021-highway-61-revisited-part-3?playlist_direction=forward.

- - -. "Highway 61 Revisited Part 4." *Bob Dylan: Album by Album* from Audioboom, 25 Aug. 2019, audioboom.com/posts/7351049-highway-61-revisited-part-4?playlist_direction=forward.

- - -. "Highway 61 Revisited Part 5." *Bob Dylan: Album by Album* from Audioboom, 1 Sept. 2019, audioboom.com/posts/7356767-highway-61-revisited-part-5?playlist_direction=forward.

- - -. "Special: 'Murder Most Foul' First Impressions." *Bob Dylan: Album by Album* from Audioboom, 27 Mar. 2020. audioboom.com/posts/7541882-special-murder-most-foul-first-impressions.

Carr, Julie and Jeffrey C. Robinson, editors. Introduction. *Active Romanticism: The Radical Impulse in Nineteenth-Century and Contemporary Poetic Practice*, Alabama UP, 2015, pp. 1-17.

Carroll, Paul. "I Lift my Voice Aloud…" *On the Poetry of Allen Ginsberg*, edited by Lewis Hyde, Michigan UP, 1984, pp. 292-313.

Carter, Mathes. *Imagine the Sound: Experimental African American Literature After Civil Rights*. Minnesota UP, 2015.

Chai, Leon. *The Romantic Foundations of the American Renaissance*. Cornell UP, 1990.

Charters, Ann, editor. "Jack Kerouac." *The Portable Beat Reader*, Penguin Books, 1992, pp. 8-10.

Christensen, Dan Ch. "The Ørsted-Ritter Partnership and the Birth of Romantic Natural Philosophy." *Annals of Science*, vol. 52, no. 2, 2006, pp. 153-185, doi.org/10.1080/00033799500200161. Accessed 4 Mar. 2020.

Cixous, Hélène. "The Laugh of the Medusa." Translated by Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen. *The University of Chicago Press Journals*, vol. 1, no. 4, 1976, pp. 875-893, www-jstor-org.du.idm.oclc.org/stable/3173239.

Clark, Tom. *Jack Kerouac: A Biography*. Paragon House, 1990.

Clark, Thomas. "Art of Poetry VIII." *The Paris Review*, no. 37, 1966, pp. 13-55.

Codrescu, Andrei. "'Howl' in Transylvania." *The Poem that Changed America:* Howl *Fifty Years Later*, edited by Jason Shinder, Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2006, pp. 47-56.

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. *Biographia Literaria; or Biographical Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions. Samuel Taylor Coleridge: The Major Works*, edited by H. J. Jackson, Oxford UP, 2008, pp. 155-482.

- - -. "Dejection: An Ode." *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: The Major Works*, edited by H. J. Jackson, Oxford UP, 2008, pp. 114-118.

- - -. "The Eolian Harp." *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: The Major Works*, edited by H. J. Jackson, Oxford UP, 2008, pp. 28-29.

Corcoran, Neil, editor. Introduction. *Do You Mr. Jones?: Bob Dylan with the Poets and Professors*. Introduction. Vintage, 2017, **pp. #-#.**

Coolidge, Clark. *Now It's Jazz: Writings on Kerouac & the Sounds*. Live Batch Press, 1999.

Coupe, Laurence. "'Vision Music': Bob Dylan via Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg." *Beat Sound, Beat Vision: The Beat Spirit and Popular Song.* Manchester UP, 2007, pp. 79-120.

Courtney, W. L. "The Mask of Descartes." *Fortnightly Review*, vol. 48, no. 288, 1890, pp. 906-913. du.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.du.idm.oclc.org/docview/2434912? accountid=14608.

Cousin, Victor. *Lectures on the True, the Beautiful and the Good*. Translated by O.W. Wight, Scholar Select, 2017.

Curtin, Edward. "Bob Dylan & the Culture Industry's Destruction of Dissent." *Consortium News*, 25 Jun. 2019, consortiumnews.com/2019/06/25/bob-dylan-the-culture-industrys-destruction-of-dissent/. Accessed 26 Jun. 2019.

Dalton, David. *Janis*. Simon & Schuster, 1971.

Damrosch, Leopold. *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Restless Genius*. Houghton Mifflin Co., 2005.

Dann, Kevin. *Expect Great Things: The Life and Search of Henry David Thoreau*. TarcherPerigee, 2017.

Davies, Damian Walford. "'In the Path of Blake': Dylan Thomas's 'Altarwise by Owl-Light'." *The Monstrous Debt: Modalities of Romantic Influence in Twentieth-Century Literature*, edited by Damian Walford Damon and Richard Marggraf-Turley. Wayne State UP, 2006, pp. **#-#.**

Du Bois, W. E. B. *The Souls of Black Folk*. Edited by Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Terri Hume Oliver. W. W. Norton & Company, 1999.

Dylan, Bob. "Ballad of a Thin Man." *Highway 61 Revisited*, Columbia Records, 1965.

- - -. "Blowin' in the Wind." *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan,* Columbia Records, 1963.

- - -. "Bob Dylan's 115th Dream." *Bringing It All Back Home*, Columbia Records, 1965.

- - -. "Chimes of Freedom." *Another Side of Bob Dylan*, Columbia Records, 1964.

- - -. *Chronicles: Volume One.* Simon & Schuster, 2005.

- - -. "Desolation Row." *Highway 61 Revisited*, Columbia Records, 1965.

- - -. "Gates of Eden." *Bringing It All Back Home*, Columbia Records, 1965.

- - -. "Girl from the North Country." *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan*, Columbia Records, 1963.

- - -. "Gotta Serve Somebody." *Slow Train Coming*, Columbia Records, 1979.

- - -. "Highway 61 Revisited." *Highway 61 Revisited*, Columbia Records, 1965.

- - -. "I'm Note There." *I'm Not There*, Columbia Records, 2007.

- - -. "It Ain't Me Babe." *Bringing It All Back Home*, Columbia Records, 1965.

- - -. "It's All Over Now, Baby Blue." *Bringing It All Back Home*, Columbia Records, 1965.

- - -. "It's Alright, Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)." *Bringing It All Back Home*, Columbia Records, 1965.

- - -. "Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues." *Highway 61 Revisited*, Columbia Records, 1965.

- - -. "Like a Rolling Stone." *Highway 61 Revisited*, Columbia Records, 1965.

- - -. Liner Notes. *Bringing It All Back Home*, Columbia Records, 1965.

- - -. Liner Notes. *Desire*, Columbia Records, 1976.

- - -. Liner Notes. *Highway 61 Revisited*, Columbia Records, 1965.

- - -. Liner Notes. *The Times They Are A-Changin'*, Columbia Records, 1964.

- - -. "Love Minus Zero/No Limit." *Bringing It All Back Home*, Columbia Records, 1965.

- - -. "Maggie's Farm." *Bringing It All Back Home*, Columbia Records, 1965.

- - -. "Masters of War." *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan*, Columbia Records, 1963.

- - -. "Murder Most Foul." *Murder Most Foul*, Columbia Records, 2020. *Spotify*, open.spotify.com/track/55dw4v6Uw6lmqGUxM6vdzV?si=HZsK7sGFQoqcbNP-N4zgYA.

- - -. "Mr. Tambourine Man." *Bringing It All Back Home*, Columbia Records, 1965.

- - -. "My Back Pages." *Another Side of Bob Dylan*, Columbia Records, 1964.

- - -. "Nobel Lecture." *The Nobel Prize*, 5 Jun. 2017, www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/2016/dylan/lecture/. Accessed on 18 June 2019.

- - -. "On the Road Again." *Bringing It All Back Home*, Columbia Records, 1965.

- - -. "One More Cup of Coffee." *Desire*, Columbia Records, 1976.

- - -. "Outlaw Blues." *Bringing It All Back Home*, Columbia Records, 1965.

- - -. "Queen Jane Approximately." *Highway 61 Revisited*, Columbia Records, 1965.

- - -. "Rainy Day Women #12 & 35." *Blonde on Blonde*, Columbia Records, 1966.

- - -. "Subterranean Homesick Blues." *Bringing It All Back Home*, Columbia Records, 1965.

- - -. "Tombstone Blues." *Highway 61 Revisited*, Columbia Records, 1965.

Eliot. T. S. "Hamlet." 1919. *The Poetry Foundation*, www.poetryfoundation.org/articles/69399/ hamlet. Accessed 26 Mar. 2020.

Ellison, Ralph Waldo. *Shadow & Act*. Signet Books, 1966.

Emblidge, David. "I Feel, Therefore I am: The Blues-Rock of Janis Joplin." *Southwest Review*, vol. 61, no. 4, 1976, pp. 341-353, www.jstor.org/stable/43468881.

Emerson, Ralph Waldo. "The Harp." 1904. *Bartleby*, www.bartleby.com/370/85.html.

- - -. "The Over-Soul." 1841. *American Transcendentalism Web,* archive.vcu.edu /english/engweb/transcendentalism/authors/emerson/essays/oversoul.html. Accessed 13 Feb. 2020.

- - -. "The Poet." *The Norton Anthology of American Literature: 1820-1865*, edited by Arnold Krupat and Robert S. Levine, vol. B, 8th ed., W.W. Norton & Company, 2012, pp. 295-310.

- - -. "Nature." 1836. *Transcendentalism: A Reader*, edited by Joel Myerson, Oxford UP, 2000, pp. 124-160.

Esslin, Martin. "The Theatre of the Absurd." *The Tulane Drama Review*, vol. 4, no. 4, 1960, pp. 3-15. www.jstor.org/stable/1124873.

Everett, Alexander H. "History of Intellectual Philosophy." *The Transcendentalists*, edited by Perry Miller, Harvard UP, 1978, pp. 26-33.

Ferlinghetti, Lawrence. Editor's Note. *The First Third*, City Lights Books, 1981, p. vi.

Folsom, Ed, and Kenneth M. Price. "Walt Whitman." *The Walt Whitman Archive*, whitmanarchive.org/biography/walt_whitman/index.html. Accessed on 30 Mar. 2020.

Foust, Graham. "Riding In Cars In Poems: Williams, Stevens, Creeley." *American Poet*, vol. 35, 2008, pp. 44-47.

Fowlie, Wallace. *Rimbaud and Jim Morrison: The Rebel as Poet.* Duke UP, 1994.

Friedman, Myra. *Janis Joplin: Buried Alive*. Harmony Books, 1992.

Frye, Northrop. *The Double Vision: Language and Meaning in Religion.* Toronto UP, 1991.

Gates, Sarah. "The Truth Just Twists." The World of Bob Dylan Symposium, 30 May – 2 Jun. 2019, University of Tulsa, Tulsa, OK. Panel Presentation.

Gilmore, Mikal. "Allen Ginsberg: 1926-1997." *The Rolling Stone Book of the Beats: The Beat Generation and American Culture*, edited by Holly George-Warren, Hyperion, 1999, pp. 227-240.

Ginsberg, Allen. *The Best Minds of My Generation: A Literary History of the Beats*. Edited by Bill Morgan, Grove Press, 2017.

- - -. "The Change: *Kyoto-Tokyo Express*." *Collected Poems: 1947-1997*. HarperCollins, 2006, pp. 332-338.

- - -. "Death to Van Gogh's Ear!" *Collected Poems: 1947-1997*. HarperCollins, 2006, pp. 175-178.

- - -. "The Dharma Bums." Review of *The Dharma Bums*, by Jack Kerouac. *Village Voice*, vol. 4, no. 3, 12 Nov. 1958, www.villagevoice.com/2008/06/02/allen-ginsberg-on-the-dharma-bums/.

- - -. "Hiway Poesy LA-Albuquerque-Texas-Wichita." *Collected Poems: 1947-1997*. HarperCollins, 2006, pp. 390-400.

- - -. *Howl. Collected Poems: 1947-1997*. HarperCollins, 2006, pp. 134-141.

- - -. *Journals: Early Fifties Early Sixties*. Edited by Gordon Ball, Grove Press, 1977.

- - -. *Journals Mid-Fifties: 1954-1958*. Edited by Gordon Ball, HarperCollins, 1995.

- - -. *Kaddish. Collected Poems: 1947-1997*. HarperCollins, 2006, p. 217-232.

- - -. "Meditation and Poetics." *Deliberate Prose: Selected Essays 1952-1995*, edited by Bill Morgan, HarperCollins, 2000, pp. 152-153.

- - -. "Meditation on Poetics." *Deliberate Prose: Selected Essays 1952-1995*, edited by Bill Morgan, HarperCollins, 2000, pp. 262-273.

- - -. "Metaphysics." *Collected Poems: 1947-1997*. HarperCollins, 2006, p. 41.

- - -. "Notes Written on Finally Recording *Howl*." *Deliberate Prose: Selected Essays 1952-1995*, edited by Bill Morgan, Harper Perennial, 2001, pp. 229-232.

- - -. "Nuts to Plutonium!" *Deliberate Prose: Selected Essays 1952-1995*, edited by Bill Morgan, Harper Perennial, 2000, pp. 21-28.

- - -. "Poetry, Violence, and the Trembling Lambs or Independence Day Manifesto." *Deliberate Prose: Selected Essays 1952-1995*, edited by Bill Morgan, HarperCollins, 2000, pp. 3-5.

- - -. "Some Metamorphoses of Personal Prosody." *Deliberate Prose: Selected Essays 1952-1995*, edited by Bill Morgan, HarperCollins, 2000, pp. 258-260.

- - -. *Spontaneous Mind: Selected Interviews*, edited by David Carter. HarperCollins, 2001.

- - -. "A Supermarket in California." *Collected Poems: 1947-1997*. HarperCollins, 2006, p. 144.

- - -. "Visions of the Great Remember." *Visions of Cody*, by Jack Kerouac, Penguin, 1993, pp. 401-430.

- - -. "Wales Visitation." *Collected Poems: 1947-1997*. HarperCollins, 2006, pp. 488-490.

- - -. "What Way I Write." *Deliberate Prose: Selected Essays 1952-1995*, edited by Bill Morgan, HarperCollins, 2000, pp. 255-257.

- - -. *Wichita Vortex Sutra. Collected Poems: 1947-1997*. HarperCollins, 2006, pp. 402-419.

Gleason, Ralph J. "Bob Dylan Gives Press Conference in San Francisco." *Rolling Stone*, 14 Dec. 1967, www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/bob-dylan-gives-press-conference-in-san-francisco-246805/. Accessed 13 May 2019.

- - -. "Bob Dylan Gives Press Conference in San Francisco, Part II." *Rolling Stone*, 14 Dec. 1967, www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/bob-dylan-gives-press-conference-in-san-francisco-part-ii-246620/. Accessed 14 May 2019.

Goffman, Ken, and Dan Joy. *Counterculture Through the Ages: From Abraham to Acid House.* Villard, 2004.

Gould Axelrod, Steven, Camille Roman, and Thomas Travisano. "Bob Dylan." *The New Anthology of American Poetry: Postmodernisms 1950-Present*, Rutgers UP, 2012, pp. 332-340.

Guralnick, Peter. *Feel Like Going Home: Portraits in Blues and Rock 'N' Roll.* Back Bay Books, 1999.

Hampton, Timothy. "Absolutely Modern: Dylan, Rimbaud, and Visionary Song." *Representations*, vol. 132, no. 1, 2015, pp. 1-29.

- - -. "Tangled Generation: Dylan, Kerouac, Petrarch, and the Poetics of Escape." *Critical Inquiry,* vol. 39, no. 4, 2013, pp. 703-731.

Hand Jones, Christine. "*Bringing It All Back Home* and Dylan's Postmodern Apocalypse." The World of Bob Dylan Symposium, 30 May – 2 Jun. 2019, University of Tulsa, Tulsa, OK. Panel Presentation.

Harvilla, Rob. "Dylan's Voice Archives: Mods and Rockers Face Off in an Epic Orgy of State-Crashing and Fruit-Throwing." *The Village Voice*, 24 Jan. 2011, www.villagevoice.com/2011/01/24/dylans-voice-archives-mods-and-rockers-face-off-in-an-epic-orgy-of-stage-crashing-and-fruit-throwing/. Accessed 21 Jun. 2019.

Heine, Steven. *Bargainin' For Salvation: Bob Dylan, a Zen Master?* Continuum Books, 2009.

Hentoff, Nat. "Bob Dylan, the Wanderer: A Fusion of Huck Finn and Woody Guthrie, the Musician Writes Songs that Sound Drawn from Oral History." *The New Yorker*, 16 Oct. 1964. www.newyorker.com/magazine/1964/10/24/the-crackin-shakin-breakin-sounds. Accessed 12 June 2019.

Heylin, Clinton. *Revolution in the Air: The Songs of Bob Dylan, Volume 1: 1957-73*. Constable & Robinson, 2010.

Hilton, Nelson. "Waxed in Blake." *Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly*, vol. 43, no. 3, 2009-10, pp. 110-11.

"Hipster." *Oxford English Dictionary*, www-oed-com.du.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/87189?rskey=oQ38a4&result=2&isAdvanced=false#eid. Accessed 2 Jul. 2019.

Horning, Rob. "The Voice of a Generation Yawns." *Dissent*, Winter 2014, www.dissentmagazine.org/article/the-voice-of-a-generation-yawns. Accessed 14 May 2019.

Huffstetler, Edward W. "Spontaneity." *Walt Whitman: An Encyclopedia*, edited by J. R. LeMaster and Donald D. Kummings, Garland Publishing, 1998. *The Walt Whitman Archive*, whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/encyclopedia/entry_682.html. Accessed on 28 Feb. 2020.

Inskeep, Steve. "Bob Dylan Doesn't Accept Being the 'Voice of His Generation'." *NPR*, 14 Oct. 2016, www.npr.org/2016/10/14/497911840/bob-dylan-doesnt-accept-being-the-voice-of-his-generation. Accessed 14 May 2019.

"Jerry Garcia Talks About Neal Cassady." *YouTube*, uploaded by Jon Bonner, 21 Sept. 2018, www.youtube.com/watch?v=C4poeNfbEkE.

The Jimi Hendrix Experience. "If 6 Was 9." *Axis: Bold as Love*, 1967.

Jones, Jeffrey. "Bob Dylan's Ballad of Mister Jones…by Mister Jones: A Humiliated College Student's War Crime Confession." *Rolling Stone*, 18 Dec. 1975,

www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/bob-dylans-ballad-of-mister-jones-by-mister-jones-103867/. Accessed 12 June 2019.

Jones, LeRoi. *Blues People: Negro Music in White America*. Harper Perennial, 1999.

Joplin, Janis. "Kozmic Blues." Written by Janis Joplin and Gabriel Mekler, *I Got Dem Ol' Kozmic Blues Again Mama!*, Columbia, 1969.

- - -. "Little Girl Blue." Written by Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart, *I Got Dem Ol' Kozmic Blues Again Mama!*, Columbia, 1969.

- - -. "Work Me, Lord." Written by Nick Gravenites, *I Got Dem Ol' Kozmic Blues Again Mama!*, Columbia, 1969.

Joplin, Laura. *Love, Janis*. Vintage, 2005.

Kelly, Caroline. "Washington Post: US Intelligence Warned Trump in January and February as He Dismissed Coronavirus Threat." *CNN Politics*, 21 Mar. 2020, www.cnn.com/2020/03/20/politics/us-intelligence-reports-trump-coronavirus/index.html. Accessed 2 Apr. 2020.

Kerouac, Jack. *Big Sur*. Penguin, 1962.

- - -. "Essentials of Spontaneous Prose." 1958. *Microsoft Word* file.

- - -. "The Great Western Bus Ride." *Esquire*, 1 Mar. 1970, classic.esquire.com/article/1970/3/1/the-great-western-bus-ride.

- - -. *Heaven and Other Poems*. Gray Fox Press, 1977.

- - -. "Origins of the Beat Generation." *Playboy*, June 1959, www.iplayboy.com/issue/19590601.

- - -. *On the Road*. Penguin, 1976.

- - -. *The Town and the City*. Harcourt, 1983.

- - -. *Vanity of Duluoz: An Adventurous Education*. Penguin, 1994.

- - -. *Visions of Cody*. Penguin, 1993.

Knight, Arthur, and Kit Knight, editors. *The Beat Journey*, Tuvoti, 1978.

Kooy, Michael John. *Coleridge, Schiller, and Aesthetic Education*. Palgrave, 2002.

Larrissy, Edward. *Blake and Modern Literature*. Palgrave MacMillan, 2006.

Leary, Timothy. Forward. *Counterculture Through the Ages: From Abraham to Acid House*, edited by Ken Goffman and Dan Joy, Villard, 2004, pp. ix-xi.

Leland, John. *Hip: The History*. HarperCollins Publishers, 2004.

LeMaster, J. R. "Prophecy." *Walt Whitman: An Encyclopedia*, edited by J. R. LeMaster and Donald D. Kummings, Garland Publishing, 1998. *The Walt Whitman Archive*, whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/encyclopedia/entry_682.html. Accessed on 28 Feb. 2020.

Magnuson, Paul. ""The Eolian Harp' in Context." *Studies in Romanticism*, vol. 24, no. 1, 1985, pp. 3-20. doi: 10.2307/25600521.

Marcus, Greil. *Like a Rolling Stone: Bob Dylan at the Crossroads*. PublicAffairs, 2006.

- - -. *The Shape of Things to Come: Prophecy and the American Voice*. Picador, 2006.

Matteson, Robert S. "Emerson and the Æolian Harp." *The South Central Bulletin*, vol. 23, no. 4, 1963, pp. 4-9. doi: 10.2307/3252401.

McCormack, Jerusha Hull. "Domesticating Delphi: Emily Dickinson and the Electro-Magnetic Telegraph." *American Quarterly*, vol. 55, no. 4, 2003, pp. 569-601. muse-jhu-edu.du.idm.oclc.org/article/49762.

McCormick, Neil. "Pope Recalls Doubts About False Prophet Dylan." *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 Mar. 2007, www.smh.com.au/world/pope-recalls-doubts-about-false-prophet-dylan-20070309-gdpms1.html. Accessed 7 May 2019.

McNally, Dennis. *Desolate Angel: Jack Kerouac, The Beat Generation, and America*. De Capo Press, 2003.

Mehrotra, Namrata. *The Chorus of the Body, The Symphony of the Soul: Understanding That We Are Souls with a Body and Not Bodies with a Soul.* Educreation Publishing, 2018.

Menand, Louis. "Drive, He Wrote: What the Beats Were About." *The New Yorker*, 1 Oct. 2007, www.newyorker.com/magazine/2007/10/01/drive-he-wrote?fbclid=IwAR1v0s BFs4ropRG8ESZ8XEWYmoyQqium2woqkpqhZoYedxKbpAKZgoTZRao.

Mendelsohn, Daniel. "Rebel Rebel: Arthur Rimbaud's Brief Career." *The New Yorker*, 22 Aug. 2011, www.newyorker.com/magazine/2011/08/29/rebel-rebel.

Menon, R. V. G. *Technology and Society.* Dorling Kindersley, 2011.

"Mesmerism." *Oxford English Dictionary*, www-oed-com.du.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/116988? redirectedFrom=mesmerism#eid. Accessed 11 Feb. 2020.

"Mod." *Oxford English Dictionary*, www-oed-com.du.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/120565?rskey=tkOhsy&result=5&isAdvanced=false#eid. Accessed 21 Jun. 2019.

Mortenson, Erik. *Capturing the Beat Moment: Cultural Politics and the Poetics of Presence.* Southern Illinois UP, 2010.

Murray, Albert. "Improvisation and the Creative Process." *The Jazz Cadence of American Culture*, edited by Robert O'Meally, Columbia UP, 1998, pp. 111-113.

Newman, Ed. "From Freeze Out to Visions of Johanna: An Original Dylan Acetate." *Medium*, 5 Jan. 2019, medium.com/@ennyman/from-freeze-out-to-visions-of-johanna-an-original-dylan-acetate-f271bab75f16.

No Direction Home: Bob Dylan. Directed by Martin Scorsese, performances by Bob Dylan, Paramount Pictures, 2005.

Olson, Charles. "Projective Verse." *The New American Poetry: 1945-1960*, edited by Donald Allen, California UP, 1999, pp. 386-397.

Penman, Ian. *It Gets Me Home, This Curving Track*. Fitzcarraldo Editions, 2019.

Pennebaker, D. A. director. *Monterey Pop*. Performances by Big Brother and the Holding Company, the Jimi Hendrix Experience, the Mamas and the Papas, the Who, Jefferson Airplane, Otis Redding, and Ravi Shankar, Leacock Pennebaker), 1968.

Peters, Jeremy W. "Alarm, Denial, Blame: The Pro-Trump Media's Coronavirus Distortion." *The New York Times*, 1 Apr. 2020, www.nytimes.com/2020/04/01/us/politics/hannity-limbaugh-trump-coronavirus.html. Accessed 2 Apr. 2020.

Pfaff, Matthew. "The Invention of Sincerity: Allen Ginsberg and the Philology of the Margins." *Hip Sublime: Beat Writers and the Classical Tradition*, edited by Sheila Murnaghan and Ralph M. Rosen, Ohio UP, 2018, pp. 73-96.

Pilkington, Ed, and Tom McCarthy. "The Missing Six Weeks: How Trump Failed the Biggest Test of His Life." *The Guardian*, 28 Mar. 2020, www.theguardian.com/us-

news/2020/mar/28/trump-coronavirus-politics-us-health-disaster. Accessed 2 Apr. 2020.

Pound, Ezra. "The Teacher's Mission." *The English Journal*, vol. 23, no. 8, 1934, pp. 630-635. doi: 10.2307/804596.

Princeton Review. "Transcendentalism." *Theological Essays*, New York and London, Wiley and Putnam, 1846, pp. 608-693.

Quinn, Justin. *American Errancy: Empire, Sublimity and Modern Poetry*. College Dublin UP, 2006.

Raskin, Jonah. *American Scream: Allen Ginsberg's* Howl *and the Making of the Beat Generation*. California UP, 2006.

Ricks, Christopher. *Visions of Sin*. Penguin Group, 2003.

Rimbaud, Arthur. "Bad Blood." *Rimbaud: Complete Works, Selected Letters*, translated and edited by Wallace Fowlie, Chicago UP, 1966, pp. 175-183.

- - -. "Circus." *Rimbaud: Complete Works, Selected Letters*, translated by Wallace Fowlie, Chicago UP, p. 224.

- - -. "Farewell." *Rimbaud: Complete Works, Selected Letters*, translated by Wallace Fowlie, Chicago UP, pp. 206-209.

- - -. "Genie." *Rimbaud: Complete Works, Selected Letters*, translated by Wallace Fowlie, Chicago UP, pp. 254-257.

- - -. "To Paul Demeny: Charleville, May 15, 1871." *Rimbaud: Complete Works, Selected Letters*, translated by Wallace Fowlie, Chicago UP, pp. 304-311.

- - -. "Morning." *Rimbaud: Complete Works, Selected Letters*, translated and edited by Wallace Fowlie, Chicago UP, 1966, pp. 207.

- - -. "To Paul Demeny: Charleville, May 15, 1871."

- - -. *A Season in Hell. Rimbaud: Complete Works, Selected Letters*, translated by Wallace Fowlie, Chicago UP, pp. 172-209.

Ripley, George, translator. *Philosophical Miscellanies, From the French of Cousin, Jouffrey, and Benjamin Constant*. Boston, Hilliard, Gray, and Company, 1838.

Robertson, Robbie. *Testimony*. Crown Archetype, 2016.

Rogovoy, Seth. *Bob Dylan: Prophet, Mystic, Poet*. Scribner, 2012.

Rolling Thunder Revue: A Bob Dylan Story. Directed by Martin Scorsese, performances by Bob Dylan, Allen Ginsberg, Patti Smith, and Roger McGuinn, Netflix, 2019.

Schiller, Friedrich von. *Naïve and Sentimental Poetry, and On the Sublime: Two Essays*. Translated by Julius A. Elias. Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1967.

Schumacher, Michael. *Dharma Lion: A Critical Biography of Allen Ginsberg*. St. Martin's Press, 1992.

Schwartz, Delmore. Introduction. *Rimbaud: The Works: A Season in Hell; Poetry & Prose; Illuminations*, edited and translated by Dennis J. Carlile, 2000, pp. 13-17.

Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft. *Frankenstein; Or, the Modern Prometheus: The Original 1818 Text*, edited by D.L. Macdonald and Kathleen Scharf, 3rd ed, Broadview, 2012.

Shelley, Percy Bysshe. "A Defence of Poetry" *A Defence of Poetry and Other Essays*. E-book, Project Gutenberg, 2013, www.gutenberg.org/files/5428/5428-h/5428-h.htm.

Shelton, Robert. *No Direction Home: The Life and Music of Bob Dylan*. Backbeat Books, 2011.

Shinder, Jason. *The Poem that Changed America:* Howl *Fifty Years Later*. Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2006.

Shortridge, James R. *The Middle West: Its Meaning in American Culture*. Kansas UP, 1989.

Slate, Jeff. "How Bob Dylan Invented the Rock Star." *Esquire*, 11 Nov. 2016, www.esquire.com/entertainment/music/a50592/bob-dylan-1966-tour-box-set/?fbclid=IwAR0roTPsUQLf48l9WSs2yHUtnfGWNA7Xq5FmtEp--PGKwBREDVDviCcEhnc.

Spengler, Oswald. *The Decline of the West: Perspectives of World-History*. Translated by Charles Francis Atkinson, vol. 2, Alfred A. Knopf, 1939.

"Spontaneous." *Oxford English Dictionary*, www-oed-com.du.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/187385. Accessed 19 Feb. 2020.

Springsteen, Bruce. "'Elvis Freed Your Body, Bob Dylan Freed Your Mind': An Excerpt from Bruce's 1988 Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Induction Speech for Dylan." *Rolling Stone*, 26 Nov. 2009, www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/bruce-springsteen-elvis-freed-your-body-bob-dylan-freed-your-mind-68215/. Accessed 9 Jul. 2019.

Storey, William G., editor. Introduction. *Novenas: Prayers of Intercession and Devotion*, Loyola UP, 2005, pp. 2-3.

Szwed, John F. "Josef Škvorecky and the Tradition of Jazz Literature." *World Literature Today*, vol. 54, no. 4, 1980, pp. 586-590. www.jstor.org/stable/40135327.

Tanakh: A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures According to the Traditional Hebrew Text. First Special-Format Edition, The Jewish Publication Society, 1985.

Thomas, Lorenzo. "'Communicating by Horns': Jazz and Redemption in the Poetry of the Beats and the Black Arts Movement." *Poetry and Theatre*, special issue of *African American Review*, vol. 26, no. 2, 1992, pp. 291-298. doi: 10.2307/3041856.

Thomas, Lorenzo. "'Communicating by Horns': Jazz and Redemption in the Poetry of the Beats and the Black Arts Movement." *Poetry and Theatre*, special issue of *African American Review*, vol. 26, no. 2, 1992, 291-298. doi: 10.2307/3041856.

Thoreau, Henry David. *The Heart of Thoreau's Journals*, edited by Odell Shepard, Dover Publications, 1961.

Tietchen, Todd. Interview by the Library of America. *Library of America*, 3 Aug. 2015, www.loa.org/news-and-views/644-todd-tietchen-it-took-a-while-for-literary-culture-to-catch-up-with-what-kerouac-had-accomplished.

Tonkinson, Carole. *Big Sky Mind: Buddhism and the Beat Generation*. Riverhead Books, 1995.

Torgoff, Martin. *Bop Apocalypse: Jazz, Race, the Beats, and Drugs*. Da Capo Press, 2017.

"Trump Throws Tantrum Over Question About Coronavirus Fears: 'You're a Terrible Reporter'." *YouTube*, uploaded by *Guardian News*, 20 Mar. 2020, www.youtube.com/watch?v=CLMMbssYd6c.

Tytell, John. "The Beat Generation and the Continuing American Revolution." *The Rolling Stone Book of the Beats: The Beat Generation and American Culture*, edited by Holly George-Warren, Hyperion, 1999, pp. 55-67.

Ulin, David L. "The Beats' Holy Grail: The Letter That Inspired *On the Road*." *Lit Hub*, 5 Oct. 2018, lithub.com/the-beats-holy-grail-the-letter/.

"Visionary." *Oxford English Dictionary*, www-oed-com.du.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/223948?redirectedFrom=visionary. Accessed 27 Jun. 2019.

Warner, Simon. *Drugs, Text, and Rock 'n' Roll*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2013.

Waters, Muddy. "Rollin' Stone." *The Chess Box*, Geffen Records, 1989. *Spotify*, open.spotify.com/track/61K6lqGyrl2Aerk0LjAZem?si=T7KFJTRqSEC4JF_Grt8Jvw.

Whitman, Walt. "Death of Thomas Carlyle." *Walt Whitman: Complete Poetry and Collected Prose*, edited by Justin Kaplan, Literary Classics of the United States, Inc., 1982, pp. 886-889.

- - -. *Democratic Vistas*. *Walt Whitman: Complete Poetry and Collected Prose*, edited by Justin Kaplan, Library Classics of the United States, 1982, pp. 929-994.

- - -. "Slang in America." *Walt Whitman: Complete Poetry and Collected Prose*, edited by Justin Kaplan, Literary Classics of the United States, Inc., 1982, pp. 1165-1170.

- - -. "Song of the Open Road." *Complete Poetry and Collected Prose*, edited by Justin Kaplan, Library Classics of the United States, 1982, pp. 297-307.

- - -. "Spontaneous Me." *Walt Whitman: Complete Poetry and Collected Prose*, edited by Justin Kaplan, Literary Classics of the United States, Inc., 1982, pp. 260-262.

Willis, Ellen. "Janis Joplin's Electric Energy." *The New Yorker*, March 15, 1969, www.newyorker.com/magazine/1969/03/15/changes-janis-joplins-electric-energy.

Wordsworth, William. *Preface to Lyrical Ballads*. 1800. *Bartleby*, www.bartleby.com/39/36.html. Accessed 13 Feb. 2020.