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**TROPICAL GINSBERG: THE RESONANCE OF ALLEN
GINSBERG ON THE TROPICÁLIA**

**Florianópolis
2010**

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Dissertação de Mestrado apresentada à Banca Examinadora do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Letras/Inglês e Literatura Correspondente, do Centro de Comunicação e Expressão da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, como requisito parcial para a obtenção do título de Mestre em Letras.

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MATIAS CORBETT GARCEZ

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Esta dissertação foi julgada adequada e aprovada para obtenção do grau de Mestre em Letras no Programa de Pós-Graduação em Letras/Inglês e Literatura Correspondente, do Centro de Comunicação e Expressão da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina.

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To the Empress, for reasons far beyond what
words can name, say, or explain.

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ABSTRACT

Through a dialogical relation between poems and song lyrics, and the socio-political contexts which surrounded these texts, this research discusses the resonance that North American poet, Allen Ginsberg, had over the Brazilian musical movement, the Tropicália. The corpora are the poems “Howl” (1956), “America” (1956), “Supermarket in California” (1955), “Sunflower Sutra” (1955), “Song” (1954), and “Wild Orphan” (1952), written by Allen Ginsberg, and the songs “Batmacumba” (1968), composed by Caetano Veloso, and Gilberto Gil, “Baby” (1968), composed by Caetano Veloso, “Geléia Geral” (1968), composed by Gilberto Gil and Torquato Neto, “Alegria, Alegria” (1967), composed by Caetano Veloso, and “Domingo no Parque” (1967), composed by Gilberto Gil. The main theoretical and critical parameters of this research include: Mikhail Bakhtin and his reflections on intertextuality; James J. Farrell, who believes that the American counterculture began with the Beats; Claudio Willer, who stresses the importance of Allen Ginsberg to the Beat movement, as well as to the birth of the American counterculture; Christopher Dunn, who emphasizes the historical, social, and political relevance of the Tropicália; and Celso Favaretto, who discusses in depth the complexity of most of the Tropicália songs. Based on such parameters, this research suggests that the life and work of Allen Ginsberg had great resonance over the creation of the Tropicália.

Keywords: Beats, American counterculture, Tropicália, Brazilian counterculture.

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RESUMO

Através de uma relação dialógica entre poesia e letras de música e o contexto sócio-político que circundava tais textos, este estudo discute a ressonância que o poeta Norte Americano, Allen Ginsberg, teve sobre o movimento musical Brasileiro, a Tropicália. A *corpora* são os poemas “Howl” (1956), “America” (1956), “Supermarket in California” (1955), “Sunflower Sutra” (1955), “Song” (1954), e “Wild Orphan” (1952), escritos por Allen Ginsberg, e as músicas “Batmacumba” (1968), composta por Caetano Veloso, e Gilberto Gil, “Baby” (1968), composta por Caetano Veloso, “Geléia Geral” (1968), composta por Gilberto Gil e Torquato Neto, “Alegria, Alegria” (1967), composta por Caetano Veloso, e “Domingo no Parque” (1967), composta por Gilberto Gil. Os principais parâmetros teóricos e críticos desta pesquisa incluem: Mikhail Bakhtin e suas reflexões sobre intertextualidade; James J. Farrell, que acredita que a contracultura Americana começou com os Beats; também em Claudio Willer, que salienta a importância de Allen Ginsberg no movimento Beat e no nascimento da contracultura Americana; Christopher Dunn, que enfatiza a relevância histórica, social e política da Tropicália; e Celso Favaretto, que discute em profundidade a complexidade da grande maioria das músicas da Tropicália. Baseando-se em tais parâmetros identificados, esta dissertação sugere que a vida e obra de Allen Ginsberg tiveram grande ressonância sobre a criação da Tropicália.

Palavras-chave: Beats, Contracultura Norte Americana, Tropicália, Contracultura Brasileira

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Allen Ginsberg was much more than the poet who wrote the epic “*Howl*” (1956) or the bohemian, boisterous nonconformist who lived life to the fullest. Nevertheless, in a lot of ways this is the image that has remained for the rest of the world and future generations to come. Little is said about him being a predecessor, as well as a guru, to the 1960s American engaged counter culture. Furthermore almost nothing is said about his resonance on global popular culture or, in particular, on Brazilian popular culture, such as the Tropicália. Taking these concerns into account, this research is interested in bringing into light the resonance that the life and work of Ginsberg had on the Tropicália in Brazil.

The general contexts of this investigation are American counter culture and Brazilian counter culture. The specific contexts of this investigation are the life and poetry of Allen Ginsberg and the Tropicália. Ginsberg’s life was marked constantly by political activism, and personal commitment, as he played a leading role in the creation of American engaged counter culture of the 1960s. This activism is clear in his poetry. As Sue Asbee states, “Ginsberg protests against capitalism, consumerism, and social inequalities, using autobiography to serve a public purpose,”¹ and with this, he “made claims for poetry as a new and revolutionary force.”² The resonance of Ginsberg’s life and poetry can be seen in a global context, such as in the Tropicália. Tropicália was a countercultural artistic movement that began in Brazil, in 1967, and whose principles went head on against the principles and moral of the dictatorship that Brazil had undergone since 1964. The Tropicália managed to disrupt the cultural, economic, political and social structures of Brazil; as Christopher Dunn reminds us:

¹ Asbee, Sue. “The Poetry of Frank O’Hara and Allen Ginsberg.” The Popular and The Canonical: Debating Twentieth Century Literature 1940-2000 Ed. Johnson, David. New York: Routledge Publishing. 1997. 58

² Ibid.

Although Tropicália coalesced as a formal movement only in the realm of popular music, it was a cultural phenomenon manifest in film, theatre, visual arts, and literature. The dialogic impulse behind Tropicália would generate an extraordinary flourish of artistic innovation during a period of political and cultural conflict in Brazil.³

The threatening reality which Ginsberg and the tropicalistas were forced to face was very similar in many aspects. The American society of the 1950s was living the height of McCarthyism, a somewhat new witch hunt, with the government of the United States detaining the power of the inquisitors. Thus anyone who could represent a threat to that government was to be hunted down like witches. While the world witnessed a battle of titans – Americans vs. Soviets – roaring into the skies, with the “promise” of a nuclear hecatomb lurking around in the near future, Americans now had a new evil enemy, with the Nazi threat long gone, the Stalin-led communist threat. Everyday life in the United States became quite Spartan, as kids were taught to be tough, to be winners, to compete with gusto and might, and, even though it was important to compete, the most important thing was to win.

Obviously there was a reason behind all this industrial military apparatus. With the world completely hampered and incapacitated after World War II, Americans envisioned themselves as the detainers of decency, freedom, and morality, and it was their job to provide all that to other countries. Americans and Soviets soon began to spread their domain over Third World countries, and sure enough it was just a matter of time before they reached the biggest country in South America. Sometimes April really is the cruelest month of all, and it certainly was for the majority of Brazilians in 1964, the year that April Fool’s Day joke happened somehow to come true, and the military really did overthrow the government.

With the military having carte blanche over Brazil, and the United States funding them, one could argue, Brazil began a slow process of “Americanization.” The number of television monitors’ sales grew exponentially, rock’n’roll became a “fever,” the “hippie” figure invaded Brazilian grounds, a massive foreign capital began to circulate inside our national economy, and the differences between political

³ Dunn, Christopher. Brutality Garden: Tropicália and The Emergence of a Brazilian Counterculture. North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press, 2001. 2.

orientations became violent if latent. The violence and censorship of the dictatorship was a factor of critical influence to the creation of Tropicália. Christopher Dunn says that “[t]he tropicalistas elaborated their own critique of the conservative Right, participated in public manifestations against authoritarianism, and recorded songs that alluded to a context of violence in urban Brazil.”⁴ The Tropicália became a solid base for the counterculture of the 1960s in Brazil. Through the voices and art of artists like Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil, and Tom Zé, the Tropicália became a big threat to the government, such a threat that Caetano and Gil were exiled to London in 1969, thus putting a sudden halt to the movement.

The objective of the proposed research is to trace parallels between the life and work of Ginsberg and the emergence and development of the Tropicália movement in Brazil. In the first chapter I give a succinct description of the concepts that I shall work with in this research.

In the second chapter, “1945-1964 – Nineteen Years That Changed Everything,” I give a historical background of what was going on in the United States and the world during these years. The political expansion of the United States, through a virtually uncontrollable foreign policy, began to alter world affairs in ways we still talk about today. This houndish and violent demarcation of territory performed by the United States, throughout the 1950s and 1960s, had great resonance on Ginsberg’s poems and life, as well as the Tropicália.

In the third chapter, “Ginsberg’s Beat: The Birth of Engagéé Counterculture,” I talk about Ginsberg’s life and work, and how both had a resonance on the creation of the counterculture of the 1960s. I talk about what was going on in the United States during the 1950s. All events that were happening, whether politically or socially, seemed to have an impact on Ginsberg’s life and consequently his art. It is my belief that in order to fully understand the significance and the importance of what Ginsberg achieved, we must first look at what was going on around him in San Francisco, and elsewhere in America. The book *The Spirit of The Sixties: Making Post War Radicalism*, by James J. Farrell, served as a critical approach towards writing about this period. The author says that people began to understand the power of the individual: How one person could change history, as well as the world. This ultimate power of an individual was the driving force behind the spirit of the 1960s, according to the author. From coast to coast in

⁴ Ibid. 121.

America people began to change their passive attitudes towards politics and social life, becoming active participants.

In the fourth chapter, “Panis et Circensis or Tropicália,” I talk about what was happening in Brazil since the beginning of the military dictatorship in 1964, and how that influenced the creation of the Tropicália. I will also be talking about the spheres surrounding the Tropicália, such as: political, social, economical, and cultural, while analyzing the impact that the Tropicália had on these spheres. This same sort of individual commitment that many Americans began to have could also be seen among many Brazilians during the 1960s, especially tropicalistas. The Tropicália movement consolidated itself, among other reasons, because of the individual struggle of all its participants. The book *Brutality Garden: Tropicália and The Emergence of a Brazilian Counterculture*, by Christopher Dunn, served as an initial critical approach towards the emergence of the Tropicália, and its historical context. The author gives great importance to the historical background of the Tropicália in order to explain it. To better comprehend the Tropicália it is very important to contextualize it – the artistic ruptures which began to happen in Brazil, while keeping in mind the tense years which Brazil was living with the dictatorship. It is one thing to say “É proibido proibir”⁵ in some Youtube movie made last year, but it is something completely distinct to say it at a music festival with national broadcast, during a severe dictatorship.

In the fifth chapter, “Tropical Ginsberg: The resonance of Allen Ginsberg on the Tropicália,” I attempted a dialogical connection between both through the theoretical parameters established by Mikhail Bahktin. Through an inter-textual analysis I established a dialog between Ginsberg’s work and life and the Tropicália. Texts are utterances produced by personalities, and as utterances they relate to other texts through context. The relation between text and context is apparent in Ginsberg and the *tropicalistas*, in many ways the 1950s in the United States had a lot in common with the 1960s in Brazil. Ginsberg used his poetry as a form of protest against the industrial-military society he lived in, and the *tropicalistas* used their songs as a smart way to challenge the dictatorship that castigated Brazil.

In the sixth chapter, “Conclusion,” I give my final comments and remarks about Ginsberg and the Tropicália. I also give comments on possible next steps this research could talk about, and why this research

⁵ Which reads “It is prohibited to prohibit.” It is the title of a song written by Caetano Veloso, and a ‘maxim’ of French students during the outbursts of the revolution of 1968.

is significant.

What began as a juvenile jubilant admiration, back when I was still a teenager and read Ginsberg avidly, and listened to Tropicália songs over and over, ended up evolving into a serious and thorough research, and investigation. And now, more than two years after its beginning, I am proud of sharing with you what I could put together. I am a passionate admirer of Ginsberg and the Tropicália, and did not try to hide that through any sort of unbiased work. I do not believe such approach compromised this research, neither do I believe an unbiased work is possible – in my opinion every text will carry the author's ideas and ideology. This passionate approach only made me do this with total dedication, and commitment; furthermore, all the authors I read while researching were also profound admirers of what they were writing about. I did not try to glorify Ginsberg or the *tropicalistas*, neither their work; what I tried to do was an in-depth analysis of their work, the context of their work, and establish an intertextual relation between them.

CHAPTER II

Defining Concepts

The first concept I work with in this research is one proposed by James J. Farrell, “political personalism.” According to him, political personalism is the idea that the personal is political, where individuals participate actively in the day to day political decisions of their neighborhood and nation. The personalist, an adept of political personalism, believes every individual has a compromise with the well-being of society. For the personalist the meaning of the word democracy – government of the people – is of utmost importance, because there is no democracy if the people do not participate in it. Everyone is responsible for what goes on in the country, the worst thing is not the overt sinister plots of people, it is, rather, the desolate silence of people. People are called upon to do their part, peace is not only a state of mind, it is a necessity for daily life; personalists believed in “the inviolable dignity of persons.”⁶ This perspective of personal commitment was the fuel for the ignition of postwar radicalism in the United States.

According to Farrell, during the 1950s and 1960s, in the United States, political personalism,

Was suspicious of the market economy and the state, because they were not ultimately focused on the dignity of persons. Personalists were suspicious of the market economy because they [personalists] did not believe in *homo economicus*, who feels no obligation to others. They [personalists] decried the depersonalization of people in the impersonal factories and bureaucracies of modern economy. And they refused to countenance the injustices that the market accepted as normal. Personalists were suspicious of the state in part because they feared the corruptions of power, and in part because the habit of looking to the state for solutions to social problems excused individuals who could be doing something here and now.

⁶ Farrell, James J. The Spirit of The Sixties: Making Post War Radicalism. New York: Routledge Publishing, 1997. 6.

During the 1950s, the United States was not the kind of place one could go to a highway bar and start a conversation with any stranger about peace, and refuse “to countenance the injustices that the market accepted as normal.” This kind of talk could get you straight to jail. Notwithstanding, personalists began to grow in number throughout the 1950s, and soon the idealistic dream of some few minds bursted into the countercultural revolution of the 1960s, whose banners’ – such as: “make love, not war,” or “all you need is love” – were all deeply influenced by political personalism. If any structure breeds misery, it needs restructuring, and if people are capable of seeing such flaws, but do nothing about it, they should be held responsible for it.

This active political involvement of individuals was soon visible in the arts realm, especially in the writings of the Beats. The Beats were a group of writers and friends who gained recognition in the 1950s in the United States. Among other things, many Beats criticized the “social lie, the untruths and half-truths embodied in the whole process of socialization,”⁷ as they searched for “a nakedness of mind, and ultimately of soul.”⁸ To be beat meant to be stripped down to the bare minimum, to the naked truth of things. Beat poetry “was also considered to be typewriter jazz, aimed at catching the abrupt, syncopated rhythms, the improvisational dash and bravura of jazz, bebop, and swing.”⁹ Beat literature became quite famous with the publication of Ginsberg’s epic poem “*Howl*,” in 1956, and also with the publication of Jack Kerouac’s *On the Road*, in 1957.

Not all Beats had a commitment with socio-political issues, Burroughs and Kerouac were certified recluses, and Neal Cassady was more worried about fleeing from ex-wives and getting on the road than anything else. However, this commitment between artist and society is quite clear in Ginsberg, who would become a guru of the engaged counterculture of the 1960s. As Claudio Willer reminds us, “[a] passagem da beat à contracultura e rebeliões juvenis da década de 1960 [...] é indissociável da biografia de Ginsberg.”¹⁰ Ginsberg’s claim for

⁷ Ibid. 63.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Asbee, Sue. “The Poetry of Frank O’Hara and Allen Ginsberg.” The Popular and The Canonical: Debating Twentieth Century Literature 1940-2000 Ed. Johnson, David. New York: Routledge Publishing. 1997. 82.

¹⁰ Willer, Claudio. *Geração Beat*. Porto Alegre: L&PM. 2009. 103. Which reads “the passage of beat to the counterculture and juvenile rebellions of the 1960 is indissociable to the biography of Ginsberg.” Author’s translation.

poetry as a new “revolutionary force,” and personal involvement with socio-political issues would become the solid ground for the 1960s engaged counterculture. Many ideals Ginsberg praised and wrote about in the 1950s later on resonated on some protests of the engaged counterculture of the 1960s, ideals like participatory democracy, egalitarianism, collective growth, and communal love.

Ginsberg’s poetry, as well Beat poetry, “connected aesthetic and political concerns, rejecting the academic impersonality of the New Criticism.”¹¹ The same annulment of the individual that could be seen in the American military industrial society of the 1950s reflected on the dominant trend of literary criticism of the time, New Criticism. According to James Breslin, John Crowe Ransom’s essay, “Poetry: A Note to Ontology” (1938), and Allen Tate’s essay, “Tension in Poetry” (1938), were somewhat cornerstones of the New Criticism, as they “articulated the movement’s theoretical foundations.”¹² Breslin argues that Ransom and Tate made a clear distinction between,

Prose (or science), which is rational, abstract, and manipulative, and poetry (or art), which blended thinking and feeling in a seamless whole. A poem was thus [...] a self-enclosed space that transcended personal, social, political biases and affirmed imaginative activity as disinterested.¹³

Breslin goes on to say that the theory behind the emerging New Criticism “privileged the brief, intense, ironically self-conscious lyric; it excluded the discursive, narrative, spontaneous, passionate, committed.”¹⁴

As poetry gradually became more and more impersonal and academic, the social connotation of the poet lost a lot of its power. The romantic figure of the poet as someone like Rimbaud, young, with big starry eyes that seem to stare at the horizon, and whose verses could enchant people with its fluctuating connectivity of ideas, was long gone. The post-war poet was a highly educated, bourgeois type, whose lines were meticulously created. American post-war poetry became an art of

¹¹ Farrell, James J. *The Spirit of The Sixties: Making Post War Radicalism*. New York: Routledge Publishing. 1997. 58

¹² Breslin, James E. B. et al., *A History of Modern Poetry: Modernism and After*. 2ND Volume. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard UP. 1987. p.1080

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Ibid.

the elite, only *il miglior fabbro* would be published. Yet, in spite of all this “conservative” overtone which American post-war poetry had, Ginsberg managed to publish, and sell thousands of copies of a very personal poem, with every nameable perversion a well educated mind could think of, and many curses: the antithesis of formal poetry.

Ginsberg’s “Howl” went head on against the American Dream of the 1950s and traditional poetry, it “linked the transcendent with the material, mystical ecstasy with urban torment, in long surging Whitmanesque lines.”¹⁵ “Howl” had everything a revolution needed in order to begin, the “bravura,” the “continental” force of verses, the nudity of the author, totally exposed on verse, it “had the impact of an angry, impassioned breaking with constraints, and many of the beginning poets who read it felt that Ginsberg had given voice to – and thus opened up – areas hidden or denied by the decorum of accepted work.”¹⁶ Ginsberg became a somewhat freedom of speech and personal freedom advocate with the public readings of “Howl,” and active involvement with socio-political issues, like peace manifestations, in short, a guru for the engag   counterculture.

A very similar countercultural outburst happened in Brazil, with the appearance of the Tropic  lia. The Tropic  lia began as a music movement in 1967, with the presentations of Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil and os Mutantes in the “III Festival de M  sica Popular Brasileira,” aired by Record, a Brazilian television network. Because their presentations in the Festival were so uncommon, and dealt with so many issues when analyzed, they are considered to be the initial bursts of the Tropic  lia. Celso Favaretto suggests in his book, *Tropic  lia Alegoria Alegria*, that the “procedimento inicial do tropicalismo inseria-se na linha da modernidade: incorporava o car  ter explosivo do momento    experi  ncias culturais que vinham se processando, [...] consistia em redescobrir e criticar a tradi  o.”¹⁷

According to Luiz Tatit, in his preface to the first edition of Celso Favaretto’s *Tropic  lia Alegoria Alegria*, the Tropic  lia “nasceu num pa  s enrijecido por manique  smos que se infiltravam nos setores art  sticos coibindo diversas formas de cria  o. Em rela  o a essa ordem, n  tida e

¹⁵ Ibid. p. 1085.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Favaretto, Celso. *Tropic  lia Alegoria Alegria*. 4th Ed. Cotia: Ateli   Editorial. 2007. 31. Which reads “ the initial procedure of the tropicalismo inserted itself in the lines of modernity: it incorporated the explosive character of the moment to the cultural experiences that were being processed, {...}[it] consisted in rediscover and criticize the tradition.” Author’s translation.

definida, o tropicalismo introduziu a fratura.”¹⁸ Even though the Tropicália emerged as a musical movement, it became a cultural phenomenon, having manifestations in the realms of fine arts, theatre, literature, and cinema, as I will later on point out in chapter 5, “Tropicália, or Panis et Circensis.”

Intrinsic with the Tropicália, was the ‘marginal’ culture of Brazil. Glauco Mattoso characterizes the “marginal” as, “tudo que não se enquadrasse num padrão estabelecido[...] cabelo comprido, sexo livre, gíbi, gíria, rock, droga e outras bandeiras recentes que tipificam um fenômeno de rebeldia das novas gerações ocidentais denominado justamente contracultura.”¹⁹ This “marginality” which many fine art artists, movie and theatre directors, thinkers, musicians, and artists in general had, was a peculiar trait of Brazilian counterculture. Hélio Oiticica, self-acclaimed marginal, even did a montage with a picture of a famous drug lord of the time, the picture showed the drug lord’s dead body, and Oiticica wrote on top of the picture: ‘Seja marginal, seja herói,’²⁰ Considering that the military dictatorship that ruled the country viewed anything that did not fit the established pattern as dispensable, these artists were definitely very audacious to have affirmed their marginality.

Much like the engaged counterculture which Ginsberg helped to create, the Tropicália also helped identify Brazilian counterculture. Both Ginsberg and the tropicalistas managed to challenge the “elite” artists of their time through their work. With their “marginal” art, Ginsberg and the tropicalistas entered into direct confrontation with a great number of critics and artists who made a clear distinction between refined art, and popular art. This distinction between the popular and the refined is well portrayed by Raymond Williams in his book, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. Williams defines popular as

¹⁸ Ibid. 11. Which reads “was born in a country hardened by manichaeisms which infiltrated the artistic sectors, restraining many forms of creation. In relation to this order, distinct and defined, the tropicalismo introduced the fracture.” Author’s translation.

¹⁹ Mattoso, Glauco. *O Que É Poesia Marginal*. São Paulo: Brasiliense. 1981. 8. Which reads “everything which did not fit in an established pattern[...]long hair, free sex, comic books, slang, rock, drug, and other recent flags which typify a phenomenon of rebellion of the new eastern generations exactly named counterculture.” Author’s translation.

²⁰ Which reads, “Be a marginal, be a hero.” Author’s translation.

Originally a legal and political term, from *popularis*, Latin – belonging to the people[...]but there was also the sense of ‘low’ or ‘base’[...] Popular culture was not identified by the people but by others, and it still carries two older senses: inferior kinds of work (popular literature, popular press as distinguished from quality press); and work deliberately setting out to win favour (popular journalism or popular entertainment); as well as the modern sense of well-liked by many people, with which, of course, in many cases, the earlier senses overlap.²¹

This was the sort of reasoning which Ginsberg and the tropicalistas were forced to argue against. By affirming their “marginal” side, and letting loose their countercultural ‘yawp,’ Ginsberg and the tropicalistas were not only confronting the establishment or status quo, but also affirming their political stance of “I will fight for my rights!”

One of the most brilliant things about Ginsberg and the tropicalistas was their ability to mix different styles. The way they proposed their countercultural art was baffling for most artists, as it was obviously popular, but it also carried a highly elaborate criticism towards social structures with inherited flaws of the system, as well as arguable traces of well thought language application, as will be discussed later on in chapters 3, 4, and 5. Ginsberg’s ability to join T.S. Eliot with Walt Whitman in his verses, and the tropicalistas’ ability to unite the archaic bongo with the ultra-modern guitar distortion in their songs was something totally new, and left many artists and critics uneasy with the possibility of a revolution starting from the marginal part of society

There is ample material published which discusses the anthropophagy performed by the tropicalistas, a cultural assimilation process, where the artist devours an entire culture and (re)produces something new. This cultural cannibalism was inspired by two manifestos written by Oswald de Andrade. The first one was the “Manifesto da Poesia Pau-Brasil,”²² published in 1924, and which Christopher Dunn considers a “suggestive metaphor for a ‘native’ cultural project informed

²¹ Williams, Raymond. *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. London: Fontana. 1983. 236-237.

²² Which reads “Brazilwood Poetry Manifesto.” Author’s translation.

by contemporary international trends.”²³ Dunn sees the manifesto as being,

Structured around a binary tension between “the forest and the school” in the genesis of Brazilian culture[...]the school connotes lettered society, with its formal institutions and technological resources, and the forest serves as natural metaphor for that which was excluded or marginalized from the economic, political, and cultural centers of power and prestige.

The second manifesto was the “Manifesto Antropofágico,”²⁴ published in 1928. In this manifesto, according to Dunn, Andrade suggested “there was no national ‘essence,’ only a dynamic and conflict-ridden process of critical assimilation, or ‘deglutition,’ of various cultural influences.”²⁵ With this in mind the tropicalistas began to question the idea of ‘national’ music, or ‘traditional’ music – which will be discussed later on in chapters 4, and 5 – while also promoting much debate over what was ‘popular,’ and what was ‘refined.’

This complex assimilation process which the tropicalistas proposed with some songs can also be seen in the poetry of Allen Ginsberg. Cláudio Willer suggests that Ginsberg and the Beats “[p]rocederam à devoração antropofágica da cultura oficial, e à incorporação e revitalização daquela que estava à margem do sistema, que o establishment havia varrido para debaixo do tapete.”²⁶ According to the author, one of the innovative and daring sides of the beats is their ability to make “a ponte entre o modernismo anglo-americano, de Ezra Pound e William Carlos Williams, e a vanguarda francesa, principalmente o surrealismo.”²⁷ It becomes evident that what Ginsberg and the tropicalistas proposed with their art was something provocative

²³ Dunn, Christopher. Brutality Garden: Tropicália and The Emergence of a Brazilian Counterculture. North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press, 2001. 15.

²⁴ Which reads, “Anthropophagy Manifesto.” Author’s translation

²⁵ Dunn, Christopher. Brutality Garden: Tropicália and The Emergence of a Brazilian Counterculture. North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press, 2001. 18.

²⁶ Willer, Claudio. Uivo, Kaddish e Outros Poemas. Trans. Cláudio Willer. Porto Alegre: L&PM, 2006. 10. Which reads, “Proceeded in the cannibalistic devouring of the official culture, and in the incorporation and revitalization of that which was at the margin of the system, that the establishment had swept off to underneath the rug.” Author’s translation.

²⁷ Ibid. Which reads “the bridge between Anglo-American Modernism, of Ezra Pound, and William Carlos Williams, and French avant-garde, especially the surrealism.” Author’s translation.

and new, as well as carefully and beautifully elaborated.

It was exactly because of these startling similarities that I was compelled to research more about the dialogical relation which I thought existed between Ginsberg and the tropicalistas. Now, after so much work and research, I am convinced that I was right. Through the aid of the theoretical parameters established by Russian scholar Mikhail Bakhtin in his essay, “The Problem of The Text in Linguistics, Philology, and the Human Sciences: An Experiment in Philosophical Analysis,” I established a dialogical relation between Ginsberg’s texts and context, with the tropicalistas songs and context. According to Bakhtin,

The utterance (as a speech whole). [...] is no longer a unit of language (and not a unit of “speech flow” or the “speech chain”), but a unit of speech communication that has not mere formal definition, but contextual meaning (that is, integrated meaning that relates to value[...]and requires a responsive understanding, one that includes evaluation). The responsive understanding of a speech whole is always dialogic by nature.²⁸

For Bakhtin there are no “voiceless words that belong to no one. Each word contains voices that are sometimes infinitely distant.”²⁹ Texts generate meaning when they are related to their context, to what they talk about, and this meaning will always be produced by dialogical relations that we all make while trying to understand a text. Because Ginsberg’s poems and the tropicalistas’ songs have many elements in common, such as the confrontation element, and the provocative element, they end up entering into dialogic relations with each other. Bakhtin says that what matters,

Is not elements of the text (units) of language system that have become elements of the text, but aspects of the utterance. The utterance as a semantic whole. The relationship to others’ utterances cannot be separated from the

²⁸ Bakhtin, Mikhail M. *Speech Genres & Other Late Essays*. Trans. Vern W. McGee. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986. 125.

²⁹ *Ibid.* 124.

relationship to the object (for it is argued about, agreed upon, views converge within it), nor can it be separated from the relationship to the speaker himself.³⁰

If we look at the kind of protest that Ginsberg made, and the kind of protest the tropicalistas made, they are very similar – they talk about the triumph of love over hate, about individual freedom and rights.

The relation between Ginsberg's 1950s context and the tropicalistas 1960s context is very clear, as was said before – Industrial-Military oriented and controlled – and their relation with this context was also very similar – of confrontation and unconformity. It is no wonder then that the works they produced entered into dialogical relation with each other, as these works were a direct result of their coinciding opinions and ideas regarding the context of their lives. Ginsberg did not approve of the cold and belligerent approach towards life that many Americans had, especially the government, neither did the tropicalistas identify with the exacerbated nationalism and silencing censorship of the dictatorship. Ginsberg and the tropicalistas sounded the gong of discordance, and managed to thrive through it.

³⁰ Ibid. 122.

CHAPTER III

1945-1964: Nineteen Years That Changed Everything

3.1. On Fabricating an Empire and its Spirit – The United States of America (USA)

Men, this stuff we hear about America wanting to stay out of the war, not wanting to fight, is a lot of bullshit. Americans love to fight traditionally. All real Americans love the sting and clash of battle. When you were kids, you all admired the champion marble player; the fastest runner; the big league ball players; the toughest boxers. Americans love a winner and will not tolerate a loser. Americans despise cowards. Americans play to win all the time. I wouldn't give a hoot in hell for a man who lost and laughed. That's why Americans have never lost, not ever will lose a war, for the very thought of losing is hateful to an American. (General George Patton, addressing his troops before leaving from London to France, 1945)³¹

An ancient myth of a pueblo of the desert of Los Alamos,³² in New Mexico, said that a new era would begin when the sun rose from the West. Many centuries passed, the pueblos of Los Alamos were forced into oblivion, and in the hot and dry predawn hours of July 16, 1945, the sun mysteriously rose from the West. The ominous and destructive Moloch that somber atomic cloud produced, when reflected upon the dark lenses of the sun glasses of the highest ranking US Generals, alongside Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer, a somewhat Paracelsus of modern ages, glimpsed a murky future up ahead. The completion of operation “Trinity” from “Project Manhattan” at Los Alamos meant much more than the dusk of World War II, it meant the dawn of a new era, of a new world order which was certainly going to be the American

³¹ Province, Charles M. “General Patton’s Address to the Troops.” 23 June 2009. <http://www.pattonhq.com/speech.html>.

³² Doucet, Friedrich W. *O Livro de Ouro das Ciências Ocultas*. Trans. Maria M. Wurth Teixeira. Rio de Janeiro: Ediouro, 2002. 342

way, or no way.

Americans entered World War II as a country climbing out of its greatest depression ever, and came out as global leaders of a new age. Glory did indeed shine upon the happy, and innocent faces of victory, of the young American soldiers as they paraded down avenues in Paris and London. Their patriotic smile, still embedded with blood from the recent massacre of the satanic Nazis, easily and foolishly charmed men, and women. Back home, over the Atlantic, they were greeted in no less greater way, as true immortals, men who become myths. It was the perfect excuse to have a blast, make babies, and smile idly, as the sun seemed to shine brighter over American soil – happy baby boomer days.

After World War II, the Old World was completely crushed to splinters, and willing to accept any offer. Gliding over this new global scenario as if admiring the view from a new Olympus, Americans and Soviets prepared themselves for their feast of global dominance. World War II had just ended, but the local conflicts were only just beginning, as the Iron Curtain divided the European continent in two. A different war began, with different purposes, but still the same intentions – supreme domination. Slowly and gradually the Americans began to spread their bald eagle wings throughout the world; any opposition would be viewed as a threat. “After the victory of World War II, the sins of the Soviet Empire replaced the Nazi threat to ‘civilization.’”³³

President Truman envisioned the US as the leaders of the new global order, and as leaders they needed to nourish and protect all that was in their interest. Viewing with cautious eyes the outbursts in Turkey, and Greece, president Truman authorized US economic aid for both countries, the first step in the creation of a program bearing his name, which became known as the Truman Doctrine. The Truman Doctrine was part of the containment policy that emerged in the US shortly after World War II, which sought to contain the spread of communism through American intervention, from a fear of communist global hegemony.

The Truman Doctrine also functioned as a security measure to ensure the success of the Marshall Plan, created in June 1947. The Marshall Plan, also known as the European Recovery Program (ERP), sought to aid Europe in its post-war reconstruction. It lasted for four years, and donated around \$13 billion³⁴ US dollars to Western Europe’s

³³ Farrell, James J. *The Spirit of the Sixties*. New York: Penguin Books, 2006. 40

³⁴ U.S. Department of State Online. “Marshall Plan.” 28 June 2009
<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/cwr/16328.htm>.

countries which signed the plan.³⁵ However, the Soviets, under Stalin's hammer and sickle fists, and Vyacheslav Molotov's (Stalin's Foreign Minister) advices, argued that the Plan was making "the bosses of Wall Street [...] take the place of Germany, Japan, and Italy,"³⁶ and turned the offer to sign the Plan down flat, accepting no "slave-ensuring" help from the Americans. From the perspective of the Soviets, the Marshall Plan was not much more than an aid from Americans to Europeans to allow Europeans to buy American goods.

As the "cold" conflicts seemed only to get "hotter" and with tensions between Americans and Soviets undermining any form of dialogue, the next step for the Americans was to create an organization capable of containing the Soviet threat. Fearing that the Soviet army might be far more potent than that of the countries that signed the Treaty of Brussels³⁷, Truman sought to extend their economic aid to military aid, and so the The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), was created on April 4, 1949. With the creation of NATO, any further attack upon one NATO country would be considered an aggression to all NATO's countries.

3.2 The Escalation of Doom

The USA and the USSR do not have military-industrial complexes. They are military industrial complexes.³⁸

In the seemingly ordinary morning of August 29, 1949, the world's destiny suddenly came one step closer to its final check-out point. It was the day the Soviets presented themselves as an even bigger fiend to the capitalist free-market world, the day they introduced to the world their new atomic toy, the RDS-1. The 22 kilotons of TNT produced by the explosion of RDS-1, even being as bright as the sun for those who saw it,³⁹ was a hecatomb at the eyes of America. Political

³⁵ Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, West Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and Turkey.

³⁶Wettig, Gerhard (2008), *Stalin and the Cold War in Europe*, Rowman & Littlefield,p.142.

³⁷Belgium, Netherlands, France, United Kingdom, and Luxembourg. The Treaty was signed in March 17, 1948, and subsequently created the Western Europe's Defence Organization.

³⁸ Goodman, Paul. "A Tract of Times." *Liberation* 1 March 1956 5-6.

³⁹ Burzi, Francisco. "First Lightning." 25 June 2009. <http://www.sonicbomb.com/modules.php?name=Content&pa=showpage&pid=50>.

grounds of the world became even more unstable, as now the enemy had the same peace-ensuring weapon.

The interpretation of peace,⁴⁰ concerning both empires, was very similar to the Roman interpretation of it, Roman *pax* (29 BC –180 AD). To be at peace with Romans, or Americans and Soviets, meant to be willing to accept the new empire, abide to their rules and customs, and perhaps prosper through it; the question was, “were you willing to accept peace, or wanting to commence war? Atomic war.” The atom totem was the ultimate peace ensuring weapon, it guaranteed that no country would dare to intervene in foreign and national interests and affairs of the empires that detained and worshipped its colossal powers. With greedy needs, backed-up by atomic bombs, Soviets and Americans began their Asian expansion.

From the start, Americans were geographically hindered due to the proximity of the Soviet Union to their first prey: China. China was already a problem for Americans ever since the end of World War II. Americans backed the Kuomintang of China (KMT), also known as Chinese Nationalist Party, while Soviets aided the red army of the Communist Party of China (CPC). While negotiations between both sides for a peaceful reconstruction of China reached no consensus, battles were happening all over China. On June, 1946, the Soviet-CPC, led by Mao-Tse-tung, began what they called “war of liberation,” and what Americans called a “civil war,” a massive three year conflict which led to the proclamation of The People’s Republic of China, on October 1, 1949, and made Mao become Chairman Mao.

The defeat in China was dire for Americans, and came as a presage: if one country submits to Communism, soon it would spread to its neighbors through the domino effect. Concerned about the possibility of losing Asia, secretary of State, Dean Acheson, requested a new national security strategy plan to Paul Nitze, head of Policy Planning Staff. The 58 page document, entitled: "United States Objectives and Programs for National Security,"⁴¹ that was produced with those objectives turned out to be one of the most influential sources of American Foreign Policy for years to come. In it, Nitze’s staff argued, among other things, that: “Soviet threat would soon be greatly augmented by the addition of more weapons, including nuclear

⁴⁰ History of Filosofy I class of Dr. Luis Felipe B. Ribeiro, April, 22, 2003.

⁴¹ Also known as the NSC-68, released April 7, 1950.

weapons.”⁴² The overtones of evil given to Soviets is implicit throughout the paper, while Americans are envisioned as saviors of the “free-world” and “civilization.” Nitze claimed that the Soviets were “animated by a new fanatic faith,”⁴³ one which went head-on against what Americans and the free-world believed in. The solution was that the United States of America should, in return, “respond in kind with a massive build-up of the U.S. military and its weaponry.”⁴⁴

Therein, after a somewhat brief moment of world peace for five strangely tense years, shortly after the defeat in China, the domino effect nightmare began. The economic possibilities that the Yellow Sea presented, in addition to the strategic military positioning of Korea, gave Americans and Soviets uncountable reasons to reach out for Korea; conflicts began on June 25, 1950. Slowly the war theatre began to monstrously (re)shape the Korean landscape, culture, and civilization, north, and south of the 38th parallel.⁴⁵ Korea, which had already been under harsh Japanese rule since 1905, with the end of World War II ended up divided in two, with Kim Il-sung controlling the North area of the 38th parallel, and Syngman Rhee controlling the South area of the 38th parallel. They got rid of the Japanese, but as a collateral effect ended up in the malevolent hands of Soviets (aided by China), and Americans (aided by NATO, and United Nations).

Americans were haunted by the possibility of defeat, as president Truman would later recall in his autobiography:

Communism was acting in Korea, just as Hitler, Mussolini and the Japanese had ten, fifteen, and twenty years earlier. I felt certain that if South Korea was allowed to fall communist leaders would be emboldened to override nations closer to our own shores.⁴⁶

Nevertheless, the fear that war in Korea could escalate to an atomic war, or another world war, limited the conflicts there. Americans

⁴² Nitze, Paul. "United States Objectives and Programs for National Security." 28 June 2009. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/cwr/82209.htm>.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Geographical positioning of the border between North Korea (*Democratic People's Republic of Korea*) and South Korea (*Republic of Korea*).

⁴⁶ Truman, Harry S. *The Autobiography of Harry S. Truman*. Ed. Robert H. Ferrell. New York: University Press of Colorado, 1981. 218

did not want to risk a major conflict with the Soviets and China, whereas Soviets also feared a conflict with Americans and NATO forces. With the changes in global leadership, as Truman left the Oval Office in January, and Stalin died March 5, the Korean War proved to be a burden far too dreadful for Soviets, and Americans, and an armistice was signed in July 27, 1953.

3.3. A Change in The Office, Means a Change in The Country

The world and we have passed the midway point of a century of continuing challenge. We sense with all our faculties that forces of good and evil are massed and armed and opposed as rarely before in history.⁴⁷

It is quite peculiar to think of the subsequent years of World War II as the baby boomer days. While the American population lived a moment of pure and unbound *joie de vivre*, their leader had to deal with the responsibility of having a catastrophically potent weapon at the “distance” of an authorization. Nevertheless, their leader’s arch-enemy, and consequently America’s arch-enemy, also had the same bomb ready for attack. The lives of the Americans, their freedom, their happiness, their *joie de vivre*, everything was an instant away from vanishing into oblivion, as a result of a nuclear blast. The Americans finally created a bomb that was able to end all wars; nevertheless, we are bound to wonder – is it capable of ending any war that has commenced, or will it be capable of ending all wars as a consequence of having ended all civilization?

With the end of the American nuclear monopoly, world conflicts began a new phase. The fear that any conflict could generate an atomic apocalypse made both empires avoid attacking each other directly, while going for third world colonies, so they could spread their ideologies at the cost of hundreds of millions of civilian casualties. This new phase was marked by a constant struggle to unbridle civilian brain-wash by both super-powers, portraying the enemy as the devil, and defeat as the end of civilization. If the global dominance quest of

⁴⁷ Bartleby Online. “Eisenhower’s Inaugural Address.” 3 July 2009. <http://www.bartleby.com/124/pres54.html>.

Soviets and Americans seemed bad enough already, when Nikita Khrushchev assumed the Kremlin, and Dwight Eisenhower the White-House, the “bad” became insignificant next to what was to come.

Even though Eisenhower cut back military spending by a third of what it had been during the Truman administration, he was certainly the president who turned war into a holy sacrifice for world peace, and freedom. In his inaugural address, Ike Eisenhower, as he was known, repeatedly says the word “God” while talking about Americans, or may “God” help the Americans in the struggle they now face. From the start of his presidency, Eisenhower made it clear that the world was living a tumultuous time, and it was the responsibility of Americans to fight for a decent, and free future.

This conflict strikes directly at the faith of our fathers and the lives of our sons. No principle or treasure that we hold, from the spiritual knowledge of our free schools and churches to the creative magic of free labor and capital, nothing lies safely beyond the reach of this struggle. Freedom is pitted against slavery; lightness against the dark.⁴⁸

Coincidentally he was also the first president to authorize military mobilization without the approval of Congress.⁴⁹

The change in office created a new approach towards foreign policies; if Americans were defenders of freedom, with Eisenhower they became detainers of it, and he had but one mission – to spread it. To be the leader of the free-world meant to be responsible for the preservation of its existence, for the safety and welfare of all the nations who wished to join Americans. Just eleven years before assuming the presidency of the most powerful nation of the world, Eisenhower had been Supreme Commander of the Allies when they invaded Norway; and now, as president, just like back then in D-Day, he would stop at nothing until his mission was accomplished.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ U.S. Department of State Online. “Eisenhower Doctrine.” 28 June 2009. <http://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/EisenhowerDoctrine>.

3.4 Global Dominance Race Begins

We must be ready to dare all for our country. For history does not long entrust the care of freedom to the weak or the timid. We must acquire proficiency in defense and display stamina in purpose. We must be willing, individually and as a Nation, to accept whatever sacrifices may be required of us.⁵⁰

Throughout the decade of 1950 the world witnessed a revolutionary uprising of countries seeking new forms of government, after decades, or in some cases centuries, of colonialism. For Soviets and Americans these uprisings presented themselves as possibilities to enhance their empires by creating new alliances. However strong Soviets and Americans were, they needed all the allies they could get. Through the covert of the CIA, Americans sought to contain any country which the CIA spies viewed as having a strong nationalist élan that challenged colonial governments; these countries were viewed as pro-Soviet, or as being communist funded.

Iran's 1953 coup d' état became the first global American crusade in the forging of a new government, a pro-Western government. Even though the Prime-Minister, Mohammed Mosaddeq, was democratically elected (and the United States claimed to be fighting for democracy of the free-world), when he nationalised Iran's oil, which had been under British control (Anglo-Iranian Oil Company), he immediately became a *persona non grata* for the Western hemisphere, and it did not take much time for Americans to sense the opportunity to expand their oil market into the Middle-East. Mosaddeq was deported, and a new monarch was put in power, Mohammed Reza Pahlevi, a somewhat Anglo-American puppet. Pahlevi would remain in power for the next 26 years,⁵¹ which must have passed terribly slowly for the Iranian people, as they saw their most valuable resources being shipped abroad to the last drop.

The next year, 1954, made CIA concerns move a lot closer to American grounds – Central America. The influences of socialism on

⁵⁰ [Bartleby Online](http://www.bartleby.com/124/pres54.html). "Eisenhower's Inaugural Address." 3 July 2009. <http://www.bartleby.com/124/pres54.html>.

⁵¹ The Iranian vengeance would eventually happen with the Islamic Revolution of 1979, which brought to power the conservative regime of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán, Guatemala's president,⁵² made him a target for CIA investigation, and his country a target for US intervention. Arbenz's social and political reforms, his unionization, and his agrarian reforms, directly affected American interests.⁵³ Once more, as soon as an economic factor was involved in any American interest, military action was soon to follow. Operation PBSUCCESS,⁵⁴ which began in 1953, and ended in 1954, with a death toll in the hundreds of thousands, made Arbenz resign, in fear of his life, and the corrupt, yet pro-American, colonel Carlos Castillo Armas rise to power.

Still in the same year, 1954, the longest, and most dreaded American conflict began to shape itself – the Vietnam war. After a four-month siege, on May 4th, 1954, the French were forced to flee their Vietnam colony, making its future uncertain, and, worst of all, leaving it in the hands of communist Ho Chi Minh. Soon after, diplomatic discussions, regarding the future of Vietnam, took place in Geneva, with representatives from France, Vietnam, China, and United States. Two agreements⁵⁵ were made: First – a cease fire between French and Viet Minh, and a momentary split of Vietnam in two, North (where Ho Chi Minh remained), and South (where the French remained) of the 17th parallel. Second – North and South would not make alliances with any foreign political party, and elections would happen in 1956 to join Vietnam again.

Knowing that Ho Chi Minh would probably win the elections due to his enormous popularity among Vietnamese people, and fearing that if Vietnam was to fall under Communism, other neighboring countries would too (domino theory), the United States refused to sign the second agreement, and decided to establish its own government in the South, under the rule of Ngo Dinh Diem. Still in 1954, in a preventive action, the United States also fostered the creation of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), a somewhat Asian NATO. Members of the SEATO⁵⁶ would mutually combat the expansion of Communism in Southeast Asia. Conflicts soon erupted between Americans, and Ho Chi

⁵² Democratically elected in 1950

⁵³ The United Fruit Company, which had share holders like Allen Dulles, Head of CIA, owned a lot of land in Guatemala, and was not the least willing to have one mile taken away, and given to peasants.

⁵⁴ CIA's code-name for the coup. C.I.A. Online. 3 July 2009. http://www.foia.cia.gov/browse_docs.asp.

⁵⁵ U.S. Department of State Online. "Vietnam Diplomatic Relations." 28 June 2009. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/lw/88114.htm>.

⁵⁶ United States, France, Great Britain, New Zealand, Australia, the Philippines, Thailand and Pakistan

Minh's army, and a cease fire would only come after twenty years of horror.

The Soviets, concerned with the strong alliances the Americans were forming, i.e. NATO, and SEATO, decided also to make one for themselves. On May 14, 1955, the Soviets fostered the Warsaw Pact, binding themselves with Albania, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, and the German Democratic Republic (East Germany). Even though the Pact stated that there would be communal decision taking, and non-interference in internal affairs of members, the Soviet Union controlled most of the decisions. From there on, any aggression on a country that signed the Pact meant an aggression on all the countries of the Pact. The Pact also provided the smaller countries with more economic and military aid; but rendered them as Soviet satellite colonies.

The following year, Egyptian president, Gamal Abder Nasser, made a pivotal decision for the Anglo-Arab future. When Nasser signed an arms deal with Czechoslovakia, and recognized the Chinese government in Beijing, the United States and Britain backed out of funding the Aswan Dam;⁵⁷ Nasser immediately saw his budget a few millions short. In a "tight rope" position, Nasser was "forced" to nationalize the Suez Canal, which was controlled by France and Britain. In retaliation France and Britain made a secret alliance with Israel to invade Egypt, and on October 29, 1956, Israeli forces invaded the Sinai.

Americans and Soviets, preferring a bystander position of non-involvement, perhaps as not to jeopardize their neutral position, and to profit through an alliance with anyone who came out as a winner, called for a cease-fire. As the diplomatic solution did not settle the dispute, Americans arrived in Egypt by mid-November backed up by special United Nations forces. By December 22, France and Britain had been completely evacuated from Egypt, and Israel, by March 19 of the next year, deteriorating future negotiations for years to come. Americans also deteriorated their relationship with former allies, France and Britain, but gained a new, and much wanted alliance with Egypt. Soviet's popularity with the Middle East also grew, especially in Syria, where they began supplying arms.

Once more, in 1957, August presented itself as the cruellest month for Americans as it marked the beginning of a new era, a star wars era. The Nazis had come very close to launching the first

⁵⁷ Which was designed to control the flooding waters of the Nile, to provide electricity, and water to Egypt.

intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), but their defeat postponed the launching for more than ten years. With the end of the third Reich, German scientists were welcomed with much praising on both sides (American and Soviet). With the knowledge aid of scientists, Soviets and Americans desperately rushed against each other to conquer the skies. Then, for the misfortune of Americans, and glory of Soviets, on August, 1957,⁵⁸ the Soviets launched their first ICBM, leaving Eisenhower and his fellow Americans an inch away from panic. On October 4, in another American defeat, Soviets managed to launch Sputnik, the first artificial satellite. For Americans, to think that Soviets had missiles capable of crossing oceans, and imagine communist satellites roaming over their heads was to think about the end of civilization as they knew it. The first American satellite, Explorer, came only in 1958.

On the Egyptian Crisis of 1956, President Eisenhower feared that a Pan-Arab nationalism had been produced. This growing nationalism, in turn, could lead to an Arab-Soviet connection, which had already happened in some cases – Syria, and Jordan – and would mean the end of the American Middle-East connection. In January of the coming year Eisenhower announced his own doctrine, saying, amongst other things, that: “a country could request American economic assistance and/or aid from U.S. military forces if it was being threatened by armed aggression from another state.”⁵⁹ The first actual incursion of the Eisenhower Doctrine happened almost a year after its implementation, on July 15, 1958, with the Lebanon Crisis. The president of Lebanon, Camille Chamoun, requested American aid (which is an euphemism for intervention) against internal political opposition, which he claimed, in some cases, to be pro-communist, and linked with Syria, and Egypt. Three months was all the Americans needed to demonstrate their brilliant military tactics, and on October 25th they had already fulfilled their mission. Opposition was completely crushed, and, to ensure that someone with a firmer grip assumed presidency, Americans were able to persuade Chamoun to resign, and nominate a more suitable successor, a Christian General named Fuad Chehab. The Doctrine’s first mission proved to be quite successful.

⁵⁸ Lackey, Douglas P. Moral Principles and Nuclear Weapons. Totowa, New Jersey: Rowman & Allanheld, 1984. 49.

⁵⁹ U.S. Department of State Online. “Eisenhower Doctrine.” 28 June 2009. <http://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/EisenhowerDoctrine>.

However, America's success was brief, as 1959 began in an unusual form for most Cubans. On January 1, with almost all major Cuban cities already under control of the guerrilla "Movimiento 26 de Julio" (M-26-J), after receiving the news that the city of Santa Clara had been invaded, President Fulgencio Batista fled for the Dominican Republic. The following morning, Ernesto Guevara, and Camilo Cienfuegos, followed by their armed revolutionary comrades, entered Havana in a quite relaxed position, after Colonel Rubido – military in command after Fulgencio's flight – surrendered the capital. For most Cubans the revolution was a true liberation, and its commanders were greeted by jubilant bystanders; but for Americans it meant the loss of a puppet, which was substituted for an unfriendly, vociferous, bearded maniac.

On his last year in Office, 1960, Eisenhower was challenged by yet another heavy burden: Soviets shot down an American U-2 spyplane that was flying over Soviet controlled airspace. Since 1955 Eisenhower had been trying to implement an "open skies plan, in which each country would be permitted to make overflights of the other to conduct mutual aerial inspections of nuclear facilities and launchpads,"⁶⁰ but Khrushchev permanently turned the offer down, and tensions went soaring to the skies. Eisenhower envisioned his spy flights program as a necessary aid of a defensive mechanism Americans were forced to develop, and maintain, as a consequence of Khrushchev's repeated denial of the "open skies" program. On May 1, 1960, American U-2 pilot, Gary Powers was shot down, and captured by Soviets. Negotiations towards a peaceful agreement seemed to go nowhere, as Khrushchev demanded Eisenhower's apology for the spy incident, whereas Eisenhower demanded an "open skies" program, and under no circumstances would he apologize for keeping his country safe. The final agreement would only come with the Kennedy administration.

Kennedy, the youngest man to take office, and youngest to die on duty, began his term under considerable pressure. He met with Khrushchev in Vienna, in the North-hemisphere summer of 1961, but no consensus was reached. Even worse, Khrushchev gave a new ultimatum, with the same directions as the 1958 one, saying that he demanded that the Western powers (namely United States, France, and Great Britain) left West Berlin within six months. Kennedy's response was to increase West Berlin's garrison, turning it into a bastion. Khrushchev's response

⁶⁰ U.S. Department of State Online. "Open Skies Plan." 27 June 2009. <http://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/EisenhowerDoctrine>.

came on August 3, 1961, when Berliners awoke to find their city's geography altered. A barbed wire fence divided the east part from the west part, and it soon became the second most famous wall of the world.

Not a year after the erection of the Berlin Wall, President Kennedy was faced with perhaps the most critical moment of his presidential career: Cuban Missile Crisis. Still in 1961, Kennedy authorized the invasion of Cuba by Cuban exiles. The operation lasted only two days, and became one of Kennedy's biggest failures. In November of the same year, still determined to rid Cuba of Castro, Kennedy approved the Operation Mongoose, a plan to start a rebellion within Cuba, backed up by the United States. While Kennedy's administration planned the operation, Soviets secretly introduced medium-range nuclear missiles into Cuba. On October 14, 1962, the secret was finally unveiled, as the first proof emerged; a surveillance U-2 flight over Cuba took pictures of the medium-range ballistic missiles. "Exactly how close the United States and the Soviet Union came to nuclear war over Cuba remains one of the most keenly discussed issues of the cold war."⁶¹ It was then, after 14 days which seemed never to end, that Khrushchev miraculously accepted to remove the missiles from Cuba, so long as the United States, in return, removed theirs from Turkey, which they did after a few months.

Just as the world's doom seemed to get an inch closer everyday, and more nations started exploding their own bombs, like France in 1960, and China appearing close to blowing up their first in the same year, the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union became concerned about nuclear escalation, and talks began about a moratorium. The only problem was how Americans, English, or Soviets could be sure that the enemy was not just pretending to be on a moratorium, waiting for the precise moment to attack. While Americans and English wanted the United Nations to do on-site inspections, Soviets vetoed the idea, claiming that on-site inspection would only be an American covert spy operation. When no agreement seemed possible, a scientific breakthrough presented to the world the answer to the nuclear problem, explosions on the surface, or underground proved to be equally effective for scientific research. Finally, in 1963, the Limited Test ban Treaty was signed by the United States, the Soviet Union, and Great Britain; from there on, all surface, underwater, and sky explosions were prohibited.

⁶¹ U.S. Department of State Online. "The Bay of Pigs and Cuban Missile Crisis." 29 June 2009. <http://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/EisenhowerDoctrine>.

As Kennedy was commemorating 1000 days in office, Civil Rights, Nuclear holocaust, and communist threats unexpectedly became the least of problems to him. His death made 1964 start off on the wrong foot, as a mourning America, which had hoped for a brighter future, lost their leader. Vice-President Lyndon Baines Johnson, who had been actively involved with Civil Rights problems and National affairs, brusquely found himself with an immediate International threat that reeked of Communism, as he assumed the presidency. In a telegram from the Ambassador to Brazil, Lincoln Gordon, to the Department of the State, dated from March 28, 1964, Gordon says:

My considered conclusion is that Goulart is now definitely engaged on campaign to seize dictatorial power, accepting the active collaboration of the Brazilian Communist Party, and of other radical left revolutionaries to this end. If he were to succeed it is more than likely that Brazil would come under full Communist control. We are meanwhile undertaking complementary measures with our available resources to help strengthen resistance forces.

*It reflects the joint conclusions of the top Embassy staff based on a long chain of actions and intelligence information which convince us that there is a real and present danger to democracy and freedom in Brazil which could carry this enormous nation into the Communist camp.*⁶²

Three days later, Johnson, in a telephone conversation with Under Secretary of State, George Ball, and Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, Thomas C. Mann, already had a solution for Goulart's Brazil: "I think we ought to take every step that we can, be prepared to do everything that we need to do, just as we were in Panama, if that is at all feasible."⁶³ The next morning, Brazilians woke up to hear the most sickening, and frightening April Fool's Day joke ever, which turned out to be true, and never ending – "Sorry, your government has been overthrown by the military."

⁶² U.S. Department of State Online. "Memorandum From the Ambassador to Brazil (Gordon) to President Kennedy." 29 June 2009. <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v12/d235>.

⁶³ U.S. Department of State Online. "Telephone Conversation Among Under Secretary of State (Ball), The Assistant Secretary of State For Inter-American Relations (Mann), and President Johnson." 29 June 2009. <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v31/d199>.

CHAPTER IV

Ginsberg's Beat: The Birth of Engagé Counterculture

4.1 The Dawn of a New Movement: Personal Revolution

Your Honor, years ago I recognized my kinship with all living beings, and I made up my mind that I was not one bit better than the meanest on earth. I said then, and I say now, that while there is a lower class, I am in it, and while there is a criminal element I am of it, and while there is a soul in prison, I am not free. ("Statement to the Court" by Eugene Debs, September 8, 1918)

Everyday life in the 1950s was political and dangerous if you were not thinking about joining the circus show that was being put on for the general audience to make everyone forget the appalling truth behind all the mind-numbness, all the dazzling neon lights, the fishtail caddys, the air-conditioned lives. In the midst of all this, some displaced individuals began to mingle under a mutual, yet silenced call, that urged them to say "rather than love, than money, than fame, give me truth,"⁶⁴ because they knew that the unveiled United States amounted to the war tentacles reaching all over the globe. They knew the truth behind the American Dream, which guaranteed that all your worries would seize to exist, all your desires would be satisfied, as this is the most glorious of days we live in; but what about the cost? That was never disclosed. The cost was the monstrous military build-up, which opened the way for the military intervention-colonization of Asia, and Latin America. The killing, the bombing, the napalm, the brutal dictatorships, the body hacking, and slaughter of hundreds of thousands would always remain untold, hidden, masked.

Yet, concomitantly with the American military-industrial complex mentality of the 1950's, there co-existed a different mentality, one much more peaceful, friendly, kind, and loving. This other mentality was rapidly spreading among many Americans, who dared to ask questions

⁶⁴ Thoreau, Henry David. Walden and Civil Disobedience. New York: Barnes & Noble Classics, 2003. 258.

that could not be asked, neither answered. Why do I need to accept all this global nuclear armament, if I am completely against it? Has there not been enough bloodshed already? These “subversive” Americans, as they were known at the time, were prepared to show to their neighbor Americans, as well as the rest of the world, that their personal was also, and always, political. These “subversive” Americans were not quite ready to accept a new life style of constant death threats by nuclear holocaust. Trickling together slowly, they formed communities ready to protest, teach, preach, criticize and change their fellow Americans, and world citizens.

This Postwar radicalism that emerged after World War II was a ‘personalist’ radicalism.⁶⁵ A political personalism formed by a “combination of Catholic social thought, communitarian anarchism, radical pacifism, and humanistic psychology.”⁶⁶ The people that belonged to this “creed” fought stubbornly against what they believed to be an irrational, and unthought way of life; why be so belicious, so cautious, so antagonizing, and defensive, at all times? They could not abide to the world which their leader created for them, they could not hate their leader’s enemy, and they could not, and would not, participate in their leader’s delusion of grandeur. Their ultimate goal was to live in a world where people would be able to walk hand in hand with each other, with no hatred, war, or lies. These radicals wanted to “change the politics of culture by a culture of politics.”⁶⁷

The Catholic social thought that permeated the minds of these subversive Americans was deeply rooted in the word of Christ, creating a kind of communitarian spirituality. With the growing fear culture that President Ike gradually fostered, Americans began to get terrified even of themselves. However, for the personalist radical, to live in fear meant to live in an absence of thinking, in disharmony with the word of Christ. If you love someone, why fear him or her? If people start fearing even their neighbor, in such a paranoia state, hatred is what they slowly begin to develop towards society. But that was an outrage for the personalist radical, who would much rather live in a peaceful community. These radicals saw communities as a living organism that should be nourished, loved, and cared for. If people, all people, are creations of God, with inherited human dignity, should they not be treated likewise? The

⁶⁵ Farrell, James J. The Spirit of The Sixties: Making Post War Radicalism. New York: Routledge Publishing, 1997. 6

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid. 17.

beloved community lived accordingly to the word of Christ, seeing all people as brothers, and sisters (agape), and loving all people in a truly universal form (caritas).

Inspired by the Christian hospices of the medieval ages, and the communist-backed labor organization, International Workers of the World (IWW), everyone in the beloved community was an active member of society, working for each other, and God, in what could be described as “do for yourself, as you would for others.” “[M]an is more than an individual with individual rights, he is a person with duties toward God, himself, and his fellow man. As a person man cannot serve God without serving the Common Good.”⁶⁸ Each and every individual had to be actively involved in the well-being of his house, community, and country. Each and every individual should strive to be “useful to people to whom it is easy to do good, and who are not accustomed to have it done to them.”⁶⁹ Communitarian anarchism sought to make people become aware that if they really wanted it, they could change the country. Nevertheless, for any change to happen active involvement was necessary.

Active involvement was part of a daily routine for the personalist radical. Inspired by the Mutual-Aid concept of Soviet anarchist Pyotr Kropotkin,⁷⁰ Gandhi’s Satyagraha,⁷¹ and Thoreau’s “Civil Disobedience,”⁷² this personalist radical was ready to endure what was necessary, for the collective goodness. Kropotkin, Gandhi, and Thoreau were all willing to live a truthful life in peace and cooperation, rather than the social lie their fellow contrymen lived, blinded, perhaps, by what Blake called “satanic dark mills.”⁷³ which had polluted men’s soul

⁶⁸ Geoffrey B. Gneuchs, “Peter Maurin’s Personalist Democracy,” A Revolution of the Heart. Ed. Patrick G. Coy. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. 1988. 50.

⁶⁹ Nicolayevich, Leo Tolstoy. Family Happiness. Trans. Holy Goddard Jones. New York, HarperCollins, 2009. 93.

⁷⁰ who disagreed with the idea of Mutual-Struggle, which saw in war a condition of progress. Kropotkin believed that if life was to be successful it was necessary for people to aid each other wherever, and whenever, necessary.

⁷¹ Gandhi’s nonviolence resistance philosophy, which he developed during his struggle for India’s independence, which sought “to win over even the most hard-hearted of enemies through love.” Mandal, Sarvodaya. “Speech at Anand.” 17 August 2009. http://www.mkgandhi.org/civil_dis/civil_dis.htm.

⁷² An essay published in 1849. It was written almost in its entirety in prison, after Thoreau neglected to pay taxes that would end up supporting the Mexican War, (1846-1848) in which the United States fought against Mexico, and won. After the war, the territory known today as Texas, which belonged to Mexico, became an American state.

⁷³ From poem “Jerusalem” (1804) which criticizes the, then inciating, industrial revolution. The Concise Oxford Chronology of English Literature. Ed. Cox, Michael. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. 289.

and now controlled its will. For the personalist radical of the 1950s, political resistance was not utopian, it was a necessity. Yet the times were very different from the sixties hippie who could holler out “peace!” in Pennsylvania Avenue, 1600, Washington D.C., and get away with it. In the fifties, this political resistance, this radical pacifism of non-violent, non-involvement practices, was a synonym of Communism.

The United States in the 1950s were living the height of its “Christian realism,” where General Omar Bradley’s⁷⁴ reasoning of “peace by the accumulation of peril” was the norm. To think about living in peace meant to think about nuclear deterrence, meant to think about annihilating the communist threat, because only then would there be world peace; after all, one of the mottoes was “better dead than red.” To think that, after a colossal world war, world leaders would still want war, seems dull; however, as Charles Wright Mills wrote, “[e]verywhere in the overdeveloped world, the means of authority and of violence become total in scope and bureaucratic in form.”⁷⁵ President Ike⁷⁶ was a master in the art of portraying the Soviets as the “evil ones,” and the Americans as the supporters-providers of peace, justice, liberty, equality, and freedom. But to spread this throughout the world, according to Ike, the United States had to intervene, through any way deemed necessary. Radical pacifism was regarded as inappropriate, as it would only strengthen Communism by making it seem that Americans were willing to lay down their arms. The paranoia began to grow.

Nuclear civil defense drills were happening nation-wide, where people were required to run towards shelters in an enactment of what should be done when a nuclear explosion happened. The grim institutional videos of these drills show civilians being conducted by military personel; everyone wears a face of fear; nobody, not even the military personel, seems to understand exactly what is going on. This brutish reality might seem unreal for most of us now, but back then it was accepted as necessary, and no questions could be asked. The end was always near, and the future was ever so uncertain, everyday people were reminded that the Soviets were planning to destroy the United States, and that all real and patriotic Americans needed to combat Communism in every way.

⁷⁴ Appointed by Truman as General of the Army, on September 22, 1950.

⁷⁵ Wright Mills, Charles. *The Sociological Imagination*. Portland: Lewis and Clark University Press, 2000. 19 August 2009. <http://legacy.lclark.edu/~goldman/socimagination.html>.

⁷⁶ Who managed to make congress approve the addition of the phrase “under God” to the Pledge of Allegiance in 1955, and “In God We Trust” to coins in 1956.

In the 1950s, the United States industrialization soared to the sky, bringing the buildings of the rich company owners along with it. The country's prime concern was military, as people were becoming ever so individualistic. Technocratic suits dressed men with no souls, whose unbridled consumerism numbed their repetitive motions, which most called job. The massive urbanization rapidly made millions of people leave their homes in the country in search of a better tomorrow in the concrete jungle. However, enslaving oneself in order to pay for one's daily ration seemed only to be a step backwards in time. The promise of a better tomorrow never came true, and the millions that flooded onto the streets, from the distant 35th floor onwards, seemed to be not much more than sheep or cattle passing by.⁷⁷ To reinforce this new mentality of "your buck is your best friend," and "business is business," "schools and sports reinforced the competitive individualism of the business culture."⁷⁸

While the majority of Americans were living a life centered more and more on the functions of people, their social class and orientation, and had a strong contempt for the poor and different, the so called "subversive" Americans preferred to live a humanistic life centered on personhood, feelings, life, and well-being. In the 1950s, the height of the American Dream, McCarthyism⁷⁹ spread rapidly, and large public coalitions were formed which went against, amongst other things, social welfare provisions, and the reduction of social inequalities, because these activities and programs were viewed as being communist-oriented. However, personalist radicals decried this path which American society gradually began to trail, a path of fear, and hatred, which sought to exclude all abnormalities in the likeness of the Arian pursuit of Hitler. These radicals believed that all people were created as equals, no one was "more equal" than anyone.

But this humanistic approach to life of the personalist radical was deemed improper by the majority of Americans, due to McCarthy's constant accusations that Communism was a threat to American integrity, and morality. To be too concerned with the poor, to the point of wanting social reforms, meant that you were a threat to the traditional American family, the social organization, and stability of the United

⁷⁷ As Charles Chaplin showed us in the beginning of his film *Modern Times* (1936)

⁷⁸ Melville, Keith. Communes in the Counterculture: Origins, Theories, Styles of Life. New York: William Morrow, 1972. 27.

⁷⁹ A political movement that began in the late 1940s, and lasted until the late 1950s, whose name was inspired by Senator Joseph McCarthy. Senator McCarthy was famous for making unproven accusations of disloyalty, Un-American activities, subversion, and treason.

States. To oppose war meant that you were not a “real” Christian,⁸⁰ for the “real” Christian was a loyal Christian who knew it had a duty to God, and, as the government would repeatedly state: “God’s mission was also the American mission.”⁸¹ That mission was the war against Communism, which was a just and necessary war, because freedom, equality, and justice had to prevail throughout the world – a war for peace.

Senator Edward Martin managed to epitomize the identification which Americans had with God, and the necessity of war, when he said: “Americans must move forward with the atomic bomb in one hand and the cross in the other.”⁸² Nevertheless, in spite of all this opposition, defeat or giving-up was out of the question for the personalist radical, who had duties with God, such as to struggle for peace through peaceful ways, and for the end of famine, war, social inequalities, and racial prejudice of any form. Many were put in jail, many were beaten-up, many were silenced by the empowering barks of the German-shepherds, but many persisted. The personalist radical was ready to endure everything, the path was going to be the less traveled by, but in the end it would make all the difference.

4.2 Conceiving a Culture of Radicalisms

The Communitarian Revolution
 Is basically
 A personal revolution.
 It starts with I,
 Not with They.
 One I plus one I
 Makes two I’s
 And two I’s make We.
 We is a community,
 While “they” is a crowd.(15-24)⁸³

⁸⁰ As evangelist Billy Graham, religious consultant of many American presidents of the twentieth century, would frequently say in his flaming speeches. He said that Christians could participate in war and not be personally responsible.

⁸¹ Farrell, James J. The Spirit of The Sixties: Making Post War Radicalism. New York: Routledge Publishing, 1997. 40.

⁸² Whitfield, Stephen J. The Culture of the Cold War. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1991. 87.

⁸³ Zwick, Mark. “Peter Maurin’s Easy Essays.” 29 August 2009. <http://www.cjd.org/paper/essays.html>.

If the birth of the engagé counterculture is to be credited to Allen Ginsberg, and the beats, it was certainly conceived by Dorothy Day, Thomas Merton, and Peter Maurin, some years before Ginsberg became known worldwide as the author of the epic poem “Howl.” As spiritual and intellectual leaders of the personalist radicals, Day, Merton, and Maurin managed to carry within themselves the essence of the here and now revolution that would change an entire country. Their speeches, sermons, writings, and lives were the initial sparks of the monumental fire that would begin later on with Allen Ginsberg, and the beats. For any social organization to succeed it must have two things: be built upon truth, and love for the cause, and it must be guided by people with the highest courage, and wisdom, who are always willing to fight stubbornly against all opposition. Day, Merton, and Maurin were the best, and brightest leaders the personalist radicals could have.

Dorothy Day was all but an average American woman of her time. She was the fierce warrior of the trio. Day admired the religious radicalisms of John of the Cross, and Teresa of Avila, considered co-founders of the Discalced Carmelites.⁸⁴ Unwilling to accept the social norm, in which women were expected to stay home, and take care of the children and the house, Day worked as organizer, nurse, cashier, reporter, and in many other jobs before she understood her true calling. Together with French socialist-anarchist, Peter Maurin, Day founded the Catholic Worker movement, and journal. The Catholic Worker movement was a pacifist movement which fought against poverty, social inequality, and war. Day managed to devote her life for this cause, and ask for nothing in return. She fought through all known manners, like protests, printing the *Catholic Worker*,⁸⁵ helping create and maintain the Houses of Hospitality,⁸⁶ and Agronomic Universities,⁸⁷ giving speeches and traveling around the world to promote peace, unity, and love.

⁸⁴ A Catholic mendicant order.

⁸⁵ A newspaper which she edited from 1933 (the year it was founded) until 1980 (the year she died). The *Catholic Worker* was a journal devoted to spread the word of the here and now revolution, promoting social justice, as it went head on against the military-industrial complex reality of the 1950s United States. The *Worker* was the best way for Day and Maurin to spread their Catholic social thoughts, and actions.

⁸⁶ Another Day-Maurin creation. The Houses of Hospitality were sanctuary-like shelters that voluntarily fed and housed the poor. They still exist today all over the world.

⁸⁷ “Communitarian farms, where body and mind could be exercised for the glory of God.” Farrell, James J. *The Spirit of The Sixties: Making Post War Radicalism*. New York: Routledge Publishing. 1997. 35. They emphasized the importance of an agrarian life, as a response to the growing urban-industrialization that was happening all over America. In these farms everyone helped, men and women shared the same tasks. They still exist today.

Alongside Day on all her struggles was Peter Maurin, a French intellectual, peasant by choice, antimodernist, who believed that the true Christian values of love and brotherhood were being replaced by the worship of money. The poet of the trio, Maurin was responsible for bringing Russian anarchist texts, like Peter Kropotkin's "Mutual-Aid: A Factor of Evolution"⁸⁸ and "Fields, Factories, and Workshops"⁸⁹ which would resonate in Dorothy's work futurely, like the Houses of Hospitality. Maurin, an admirer of St. Francis of Assisi, lived a life of devoted work towards the community. He always made his ends be in agreement with his means for social change. In a society which increasingly saw its individuals as disconnected beings, Maurin argued that society is a reflection of the individuals that compose it. We should measure our progress not by looking at the wealth of nations, but by looking at their poverty. Maurin saw all people as individuals, and equals, with God-inherited dignity and rights. If every individual would step up and take part in the functioning of the communities, not with profit in mind, but for the greater good, it would be best for the state, the country, and the world. For Maurin, people have a direct influence in the society and world they live in.

Both Day and Maurin were deeply influenced by the works and life of Thomas Merton. Even though he was a sort of younger brother to Day and Maurin – being 18 years younger than Day, and 38 years younger than Maurin, Merton more than once became the wise older brother, when Maurin or Day went to see him in search of advice and support at the Abbey of Gethsemani, where he lived as a monk. Merton was one of the pioneers of interfaith dialogs, he studied, published, and met with individuals like Nhat Hanh,⁹⁰ the Dalai Lama, and D.T.Suzuki.⁹¹ His concerns were not on poverty, and social change, inasmuch as they were on the atomic bomb. Merton, wisely, did not go full throttle against the "just war" theory, knowing that that would cause a much undesired turmoil with people he saw as possible allies, such as Reinhold Niebuhr,⁹² and the Catholic Church. Instead, he preferred to establish a peaceful and understanding dialogue with the "enemy" – such as Suzuki (Japanese) or Hanh (Vietnamese) – with no fear or hate. He was a somewhat religious diplomat, who could transit through all

⁸⁸ Previously mentioned.

⁸⁹ A book which talks about local organization and production, of agrarian peasants. It suggests the necessity of a return to the life in the country.

⁹⁰ Vietnamese Zen-Buddhist monk, poet, activist, and writer.

⁹¹ Japanese thinker, philosopher, and writer of Zen, Jodo Shinshu, and Buddhism.

⁹² Prominent American Theologian, and contributor to the 'just war' theory.

structures of life, with diplomatic immunity, and still captivate all sides by his good spirit. He was the spiritual force of the trio.

Day, Maurin, and Merton were true inspirers of what became known as the engageé counterculture of the 1960s, two decades in advance. Their ideals of love, personal involvement, radical pacifism, and teachings to make people re-discover themselves were cornerstones for the sixties' movements and spirit. However, as the "fear" culture, giant corporations, and the industrial urbanization of cities grew at a devilishly rapid pace during the 1950s, Day, Maurin, and Merton were faced with challenges that became harder and harder to overcome. McCarthyism was at the height of its popularity. To talk about peace, social equality, anarchism, or the likes, meant that you were either a communist, or had some involvement with the communist party. As for the American population, because they were living their economic glorious golden age, with the economy rising with the morning sun each day a little bit higher, they were perfectly willing to abide to their leaders' terms and demands. When perspectives seemed not at all good, Day's, Maurin's, and Merton's radical movement was suddenly re-enforced, as the sparkling re-birth of the phoenix, by an errant bard that was absolutely ready to "sound his barbaric yawp over the roof tops of the world"(4).⁹³

4.3 The Cradle of the Beats

America I've given you all and now I'm nothing.
 America two dollars and twenty-seven cents
 January 17, 1956.
 I can't stand my own mind.
 America when will we end the human war?
 Go fuck yourself with your atom bomb.⁹⁴ (1-6)

The Catholic Workers – Day, Maurin, and Merton – and the beats had a lot in common. Their lives and works challenged the oppressive reality they lived in, they were outsiders and marginals of society, and they struggled head-on against all forms of segregations – racial, social,

⁹³ Whitman, Walt. "My Barbaric Yawp." *American Verse From Colonial Days to the Present*. Ed. Williams, Oscar. New York: Washington Press, 1955. 537.

⁹⁴ Ginsberg, Allen. *Howl and other poems*. 40th ed. Ed. Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Nancy J. Peters. San Francisco: City Lights Bookstore, 1992. 39.

economic, and political. Even though their beliefs and behavior were sometimes disparate, their ultimate goal was the same: may we live in peace, joy, and trust, before we turn to ashes and dust – Ohm, Hallelujah. The Catholic Workers assumed a traditional, strong and arduous religious approach to life, and condemned the hedonistic fixation of the beats, and the secular beats decried the eternal sorrow, and need of forgiveness of the Catholic Workers; yet that was only superficial.

The Catholic Workers were heavily concerned with socio-economic factors; their major struggle was against social inequalities, social injustice, poverty, and famine. The beats, however, were concerned with a different problem they saw beyond themselves: freedom of the individual, and freedom of speech. The Catholic Workers lived a sanctifying life beyond criticism, and had that on their behalf, while some of the beats, on the contrary, led promiscuous, libertine, and heretic homosexual lives. The Catholic Workers might have been “saints” when compared to the beats, but both were sailing through the same tempestuous sea of oppositions, and managed to overcome many obstacles. If Dorothy Day was the “flag bearer” of the Catholic Workers, Allen Ginsberg was that of the beats; Day started the engaged culture, Ginsberg the engaged counterculture.

Columbia University was the ground zero of the beats. The cold Christmas holiday of 1943, which Ginsberg thought he would spend all by himself in the solitary seminary dorm, turned out to be quite the opposite. From the other end of the corridor where Ginsberg lived came the sound of Brahms’s Trio no. 1. Ginsberg followed the notes to the door where it came from, he opened it, without knocking, and introduced himself to the blonde boy that there lied. As it turned out, the boy was Lucien Carr, and their first encounter became the foundation of a friendship which would last until Ginsberg’s death. Carr was a year older than Ginsberg, and much more experienced in life matters. It was through Carr that Ginsberg met the people that would change the course of his life: Jack Kerouac, and William Seward Burroughs: the former, soul personification of the beats, the later, mentor.

While the Catholic Workers opposed the massification of people, which the Government was eager to do, the beats opposed the cold and impersonal literary approach of New Critics. As writers, the beats faced the publishing industry, which was then completely controlled and dominated by New Criticism. The writing profession had been developed into a kind of science, pure mathematics sometimes, when referring to rhyme and metrics of poems; Thomas Sterns Eliot, and Ezra

Pound were the “cream of the crop.” Cultural significance, reader’s response, and author’s life are to be totally dismissed when one is to consider the New Criticism approach to any text which considers the text in isolation, to be analyzed through a thorough close reading. This “academic” approach to literature practiced in the United States after World War II was also what publishers had in mind when looking for authors to publish. The literature industry at that time was a very selective “club” where only few people were admitted, and “perfection was basic.”⁹⁵ The poets, writers, and critics that can be identified with the New Criticism are all very distinguished individuals, highly educated, bourgeois and aristocratic.

The beats were apt and willing to be an opposition, to challenge the New Criticism view of literature, trying to show them there will always be other forms of writing, and that the writer’s life alone was already art. For the beats, life was to be lived to the fullest, at full blast, and their writing, which sprouted directly from their life, was a vivid example of that. Ginsberg’s, Kerouac’s, and Burroughs’ works, for example, were direct reflections of themselves, as can be seen in “Howl,” “Junkie,” and “On the Road.”⁹⁶ Keeping in mind that all this was happening right in the middle of all the 1950’s war marshall reactionaries, blood-thirsty Bakersville devilish hounds who would flagellate any sort of opposition, until it became a lifeless abjection sprawled all over the floor.

The beats decided to live different lives, they wanted different “kicks” from the ordinary “whisky after coming home from a long and hard-working day,” they did not fear exposure to the public, and they did what others condemned with envious eyes. They ignited a new form of “bomb,” even more powerful than the totemic atom bomb, a social “bomb” that would expand consciousness, make hairs grow and people become aware of themselves, as well as it would herald a new spirit of poetic creation. The white bourgeois-aristocratic image of the New Criticism is very important to keep in mind when we look upon the beats, and their origin. Among writers which are considered to be beat writers, there are: LeRoi Jones, black, Neal Cassady, son of a homeless drunk father, and Gregory Corso, ex-con man. It was “the first time that the anti-bourgeois artistic rebellions were not headed exclusively by

⁹⁵ As William Carlos Williams reminded Ginsberg in an encounter they had. In Morgan, Bill. I Celebrate Myself. New York: Penguin Books. 2006. 127.

⁹⁶ The first, viewed as pornographic, and indecent, the second, a book about the habits and life of a Junkie – the author – and the third, the written spirit of the movement. All three have excerpts of explicit use of drugs, of sex, and improper behavior for the time.

bourgeois or aristocrats.”⁹⁷

The beats were countercultural by excellence, marginals and outcasts by nature. The Catholic Workers gave the personal political visibility, while the beats made poetry go back to the masses, and the masses return to poetry readings. A similar cold mechanized approach to life of General Ike and the likings, that the Catholic Workers fought against, the beats faced, when confronting the academic-scientific realm that literature was in. Neal Cassady’s thirteen-thousand word letter to Kerouac,⁹⁸ which was to change “Kerouac’s and Ginsberg’s method of writing and herald [...] a new form in American literature,”⁹⁹ would probably be instantly dismissed by a Formalism critic. The letter was composed with speed, intense vigorous energy, it made flash-backs to the past, only to come back to the present in the same sentence; it is interesting, dazzling, and brilliant, but much too pedestrian for conservative eyes. If the letter had been published at the time it was written, it probably would have been massacred by most critics, but for Ginsberg, and Kerouac, it was a dynamo.

4.4 Ginsberg’s Beat: The Birth of Engagé Counterculture

I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed
by madness (1)¹⁰⁰

The 1955 reading at the Six Gallery, the first public presentation of “Howl,” was but the first glimpse the world had of the beats, for their birth cannot be traced to any specific happening, but a long continuum of happenings which changed their lives, and works. The beats, as in any other movement, were people united under somewhat perennial ideas, and trailed the “same” path. But the beats, as the people in all other movements, were different from one another, different to a point where ideas and headings even clashed. Stylistically, the beats are also very different from one another, but when we look at beat literature the context of the writing – social, cultural, biographical – must be considered. Most beats wrote about, and wanted the same thing –

⁹⁷ Willer, Claudio. *Geração Beat*. Porto Alegre: L&PM. 2009. 21. Author’s translation.

⁹⁸ Talking about a love affair he had with Joan Anderson

⁹⁹ Morgan, Bill. *I Celebrate Myself*. New York: Penguin Books. 2006. 132.

¹⁰⁰ Ginsberg, Allen. *Howl and other poems*. 40th ed. Ed. Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Nancy J. Peters. San Francisco: City Lights Bookstore, 1992. 9.

freedom of the individual through a socio-cultural revolution.

The same military industrial complex' society which the Catholic Workers resisted to, the beats faced with their profane behavior and writing. Whereas the Catholic Workers struggled against Social injustice, the beats fought for individual liberty, and, as said before, to live a life of resistance to what the great mass of the "American Dream" was living was something overwhelming and exhausting. Socially, the beats were struggling against quite a powerful opponent, a bellicose mother land. Their writings, behavior, and life symbolized exactly what military industrial mentality despised and loathed the most: subversion, erratic behavior, and profanity. The beats were a personification of everything the "real" American citizen should despise. They dressed like a hobo, with second-hand army and beat up clothes, they behaved like mad men, they cursed, swore, and "jive-talked" like the common street-man, and some even had the "commy-rusky" beard, like Ginsberg. The beats were hell on earth for the average American.

The cultural context of the beat movement was very significant. The beats had a unique ability of bringing literature to the masses. They managed to take an art form that had been "academicised" to a sacrosanct state, and reinvent it, so that the "marginal" part of society could enjoy it. The beats gathered at coffee-houses, places frequented by all sorts of people, where you could be yourself, and feel free. In the coffee-houses spread all over the United States, artists would gather to talk, read poetry,¹⁰¹ and hear jazz. Jazz musicians from the time, like Charlie Parker, Thelonious Monk, and others, were beginning to improvise more and more with their instruments, playing much more on feeling, than anything else. This was the coffee-house atmosphere, the "trance like" places that Kerouac spoke so much about in *On the Road*, where you could see people jumping up and down, hollering 'yeahs' and 'come ons,' while the musicians would incite each other to play at their very best. In this seemingly free place, where whites, blacks, rich and poor would gather under one roof to have a good time, was where the first beat poetry readings to the 'masses' were happening. A culture of improvisation – which began with music and later on spread to poetry improvisation – was slowly uniting all these different individuals with the purpose of having one night of good music, good conversation, and poetry recitals; it was freedom, and satori¹⁰² in a small regular kind of bar.

¹⁰¹ A part of these poets began to sing their poetry, like Bob Dylan, and Joan Baez.

¹⁰² Buddhist awakening.

Finally, there is also the biographical context of the beats. It is very important to point out the extraordinary life that most beats led: a life of countless philosophical debates, poetry readings, jazz music, intense drinking binges, mad whaling over tables full of wine bottles, in the likings of Rimbaud, surrealist experiences induced by drugs, inspired by Baudelaire, Byron, and Huxley, and conversations that were everything but dull and normal day-to-day, yawning conversations. They were characters of themselves. They belonged to the world of writers, artists, thinkers, the mad ones. Slowly and gradually the beats' lives began to transcend vicinities, their converse got amplified, and their behavior glided towards a "transgressive religiousness."¹⁰³ Their life was an intrinsic part of their work. To fully comprehend the depth and importance of their poems and stories, we must also be acquainted with the biographical context of the writer.

All these three contexts must be considered when we analyze the beat movement. Claudio Willer advises the literary critic who wants to study the beats, that "the beat [movement] cannot be merely formal: it must be compromised, engaged."¹⁰⁴ If we consider such thoughts when analyzing Ginsberg, it becomes clear why he played a fundamental role in the creation of the beats, as well as the engaged counter culture. If Kerouac, Cassady, and Burroughs were the living spirit of the beats, Ginsberg was their cultural agitator, spokesman, and promoter. Ginsberg had a much more active social life than any other beat; he was "up for everything," always ready to show up where there would be a resistance demonstration. While Burroughs, Kerouac, and Cassady were traveling through the United States, and the world, Ginsberg was trying to get his friends published, attending public manifestations, actively participating in countercultural manifestations which seemed to follow his every step.

Therefore, a reading of Ginsberg is more enriching when taking into account the relation between his work and life. His poetry loses great part of its significance if we merely read it. When thinking about "Howl" we must think that back in 1955, the year of its first reading, it was the height of McCarthyism and all its fear culture, war culture, and winner's mentality. Right in the middle of all that, a weird-looking hipster, known homo-sexual, helped organize a poetry reading, and read a poem that contained language that still today many people are ashamed of, or dare not to use. Many of the beats – like Kerouac, and Burroughs – could care less about the social importance their writing

¹⁰³ Willer, Claudio. *Geração Beat*. Porto Alegre: L&PM. 2009. 120

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. 29. Author's translation.

and life, all of a sudden, began to have, whereas Ginsberg maintained himself always present in the endless whirlwind of activities surrounding the engaged counterculture. The engaged counterculture which Ginsberg helped to create was a culture of personal radicalism, active involvement, humanistic approach towards life, and peaceful ways above all.

Ginsberg had the capacity of being the crazy man with a long beard, who dressed in a really colorful and weird form, talking about love, and saying “man” in almost every sentence, and, at the same time, this incredibly centered person, with translucent objectives and a stubborn mind similar to the businessman mentality of his time. He was able to be the center of a party – like when he took off his clothes in front of John Lennon, George Harrison, and their respective mistresses¹⁰⁵ – and, at other instances, this responsible and committed person – as one of the main organizers of the Six Gallery Reading. “Ginsberg not only articulated and formed the beat [movement] [...] but institutionalized it.”¹⁰⁶

4.5 The Revolution will be televised

Esse fenômeno começou com os beats – não por qualquer falta dos verdadeiros visionários que inspiraram o movimento, mas como resultado da capacidade da moderna cultura dos meios de comunicação de reproduzir os eflúvios de movimentos e valores contraculturais e transformá-los em diversão.¹⁰⁷

Military technology certainly gave Ginsberg, and the beats, an eerie thrill, but it made communication entrepreneurs eye’s envision countless mounds of money, and their ideas reaching every single home in the United States through a TV screen. The same satellite technology that was previously used for spying could, with minor modifications when necessary, transmit TV signals from Paris, Texas, to Paris, France.

¹⁰⁵ Goldman, Albert. The Lives and Times of John Lennon. New York: Bantam Books, 1989. 283.

¹⁰⁶ Willer, Claudio. Geração Beat. Porto Alegre: L&PM. 2009. 31. Author’s translation.

¹⁰⁷ Goffman, Ken and Dan Joy. Contracultura Através dos Tempos: Do Mito de Prometeu à Cultura Digital. Trans. Alexandre Martins. Rio de Janeiro: Ediouro, 2007. 266.

Mass media was then a promising tomorrow, and radios still had the biggest slice of the “pie graph” of the communication industry. Meanwhile, throughout the suburban neighborhoods of the United States, youth rebels who opposed all forms of authority, for the first time ever, now had some economic power. As a consequence of the economic boom of the post-war period, fathers could spare some change to their kids, while other youngsters, who did not have to sustain the household, had part time jobs that gave them plenty of money. It was an explosive combination of elements, and mass media – especially TV – began to spread its extensions over nations, at the same time that the youth began to have some economic power.

Television was an accessible Hollywood, where consumers could live the life of the people they viewed, invading their privacy on a daily basis. All the anxiety of the instant atomic annihilation Syndrome could be soothed by numbly relaxing in front of the TV, while being bombarded with advertisements of all sorts, during commercial breaks, and living another person’s life, throughout the shows. Television programs covered virtually every imaginable subject, behavior, politics, technology, business, art, fashion, opinion, comedies, drama, everything; just like a newspaper or radio, but with vivid live action between “real” people. It was a daily entertainment which provided its spectators with “ready-made” opinions, and an uncontrollable lust for consumerism. This new opium of the masses could mold the opinion of its viewers like no other communication device on earth. In the United States, during the 1950s, – not to mention current days – with the right kind of people for the job, television could control people’s minds, form people’s opinions and identities, and make people believe in what they saw, especially the young.

The American teenager of the 1950s, in their early twenties, had been through hell. The 1930s kids had their young age usurped by the Depression. The 1940s kids had a dad that had shot evil Germans, and talked about some frightening Soviets who ate children, and could wipe out the entire American nation with a mysterious bomb. These were kids without a proper childhood, and with few options of social identity, other than that of the military technocratic men; these were kids who came into the world when the world was living a somewhat “new dark ages,” as result of the Depression, or the doomed consequences of the war. Many of these kids were young nihilists – without even knowing what being a nihilist meant – in search of the palace of excess. They finally found that palace, when television found them.

TV was the perfect gadget for the youth, with its pre-edited images ready to be easily assimilated, and its perpetual pleasure tone that seemed to distort the facts of life. Teenagers were a gigantic economic market, virgin, unexplored, innocent, and ready to spend its bucks without a great deal of questioning. This “ambience” proved to be fertile land for television. The best mass media technicians knew quite well that teenagers would conform themselves to whatever they – mass media technicians – created. The identity of the product would become the identity of the consumer. Gradually, the iconic image of the 1950s countercultural rebel began to be minutely elaborated by mass media technicians. These technicians knew quite well what young kids, with a potential for rebellion, wanted: a martyr, an icon.

American kids, who still bore the invisible scars of a molested infancy, began to be bombarded every single day with TV images which gave them their martyr, and icon; something they could identify with. Television offered a living fetish, the rebel without a cause, who was also disturbed, ready to burst, and mad about life and everything else. Rebellious kids, who had been forced to live a quiet and paternally abiding life, were fed psyche food with the asset of the rebellious beat image created by television. “*Era o começo da televisão, e os beats foram a primeira contracultura semiótica.*”¹⁰⁸ The raw erotic power of the anarchic beats was ready to be commercialized as a product, thanks to the effulgent capability of television of “reproducing countercultural movements and values.”

The combination of the “big brother” presence of television, with the viril power of the 1950s youth, helped to bolster the beat revolution. The beats were perfect for commercializing, they could either become a symbol of disgust, or platonic admiration, depending upon the director’s view and purpose. Whereas they had a somewhat mystic aura surrounding their every move, thanks to Jack Kerouac and Neal Cassady, they were also stigmatized as slackers, rebels, vagrants, bums, as vague as cheap syllogisms, and as superficial as a relationship between businessmen. Nevertheless, the beats were instantly worshipped by thousands of teenagers and youngsters, who desperately sought to cross the line, and walk on the wild side of life. The beats became some sort of igniting spark that suggested that something hip and cool was happening, and that things could, at last, change. The huge amount of mass media exposure – condemning the beats or praising

¹⁰⁸ Goffman, Ken and Dan Joy. *Contracultura Através dos Tempos: Do Mito de Prometeu à Cultura Digital*. Trans. Alexandre Martins. Rio de Janeiro: Ediouro, 2007. 266.

them – proved to be quite a “neon light headline attraction” for young Americans. At the same time mass media destroyed and stigmatized the beats, it also helped to turn them into what they are today. Bad publicity or good publicity was publicity anyway. Soon, the beats became an icon of counterculture. Even though most beats despised the attention they ended up receiving it due to their mass media exposure, and they certainly knew how to use it for their advantage.

After the publication of “Howl,” “On the Road,” and “Junkie,” anything seemed possible in the literary scene. If one should look at the beat movement, or the American counterculture, as an edifice, its foundation would certainly be these three works. The whole spirit of the beats, and counterculture, was there: spontaneous, daring, shocking, startling, and powerful. With the publication of “On the Road” in 1958, the decade was closing its doors in a grandiose style, and, like most good closing acts, “On the Road” was definitely a *‘molto allegro’* coda whose message for the next decade echoed, “life is what you make of it, so burn, burn, burn!”

CHAPTER V

Tropicália, or *Panis et Circensis***5.1. 1960s Brazil: Love it or Hate it**

O Terceiro mundo vai explodir! Quem tiver sapato não sobra.¹⁰⁹

Brazil was a country of promises, hopes, marvels, dreams, and exotic untouched exuberances at the beginning of the 1960s. The country had just been governed (1956-1961) by Juscelino Kubistchek, who transferred the capital to the heart of the country. His successor, weird looking Jânio Quadros, stayed less than a year in office—January 31 to August 25—and was allegedly forced out of power by “hidden forces.”¹¹⁰ The next presidency, the one of João Goulart, or Jango, would sadly add a full stop to the democratic government of Brazil; a full stop which lasted for 21 years. After a rally at *Central do Brasil* – Rio’s Central train station – on March 13, 1964, in which Jango told field workers that their struggle for a land they could call theirs was to be finally heard, and a land reform would happen in Brazil, the military decided that that was the last straw; corrections were needed. March 31st, 1964 marked the beginning of one of the most cruel, and inhumane dictatorships of the twentieth century. A series of coward acts, scoundrel manipulations, and tyrannical alterations of our constitution, were to exponentially change our socio-cultural-economic day-to-day life, in ways we still today fail to understand.

The country was entirely torn apart into two distinct political spheres – that of rich right conservative reactionaries in charge, and left politically engageé bourgeois intellectuals forced to the underground. If the republic – and here the Latin origin really means a lot – undergoes tumultuous days of extremes, it is only natural that people’s social lives trail the same path. A strong fundamentalist nationalism, which would

¹⁰⁹ “The third world is going to explode! Those who have shoes won’t last” author’s translation. Phrase repeated throughout the 1968 movie *O Bandido da Luz Vermelha* by Rogério Sganzerla.

¹¹⁰ During his brief mandate he also condemned the ‘bay of pigs’, and condecorated Ernesto “Che” Guevara with a Ordem Nacional do Cruzeiro do Sul, a commendam that the president of Brazil may give to foreigners.

later be summed up on *Médici* slogans like “Brasil, ame-o ou deixe-o,”¹¹¹ began to disfigure the country. Those who were willing to abide to the military would, no doubt, prosper by it, but those who preferred to “question” the need for guns, authoritarian behavior, and senseless censorship, would probably end up being tortured, or worse, disappearing. The right-wing elite lived its glorious days with the praise and fortification of associations like the TFP.¹¹² The underground left wing witnessed their democracy rapidly fading away, and their freedom slipping through bars, while being clubbed, electrocuted, and humiliated.

Meanwhile, Brazil began a new stage of modernization, and a massive exodus to the great capitals changed the country’s socio-economic scenario for ever. Millions of peasants were walking around the streets that seemed more like jungles to them, striving to survive, and to maintain their decency in the middle of all the craziness and depravation that the big cities could have.¹¹³ The “fifty years in five” expansion dream of Kubistckek, though in an extremely eerie manner,¹¹⁴ began to guide the minds of the military, as the “ordem e progresso”¹¹⁵ maxim slowly changed its scope and got bloody. This was a land of strong contrasts, with some laughing idly, while saluting a deranged general, and others beaten up just because they talked about unfit subjects, the country was defiled, and soon thereafter this same aggressive rupture would show up in most cultural spheres.

¹¹¹ “Brazil, love it, or leave it!” Author’s translation.

¹¹² The ultra-conservative catholic association “Sociedade Brasileira de Defesa da Tradição, Família e Propriedade.”

¹¹³ This dramatic culture shock can be seen in Anselmo Duarte’s 1962 movie, “O Pagador de Promessas”. Even though the movie’s main character, Zé-do Burro, a peasant, goes to Salvador to fulfill a candomblé promise, and not in search of a better life, he still gets “devoured” by the city because of his ingenuity.

¹¹⁴ I.e. “Para que o rico seja mais rico e, graças a eles, o pobre seja menos pobre”, said by Costa e Silva on his inaugural address, 15 March 1967. Depicting clearly how the military intended to make social changes.

¹¹⁵ “Order and progress”, author’s translation

5.2 Fine Arts: Hélio Oiticica's "Tropicália"

Não se trata mais de impor um acervo de idéias e estruturas acabadas ao espectador, mas de procurar pela descentralização da 'arte', pelo deslocamento do que se designa como arte, do campo intelectual racional para o da proposição criativa vivencial, dar ao homem, ao indivíduo de hoje, a possibilidade de 'experimentar a criação', de descobrir pela participação, esta de diversas ordens, algo que para ele possua significação.¹¹⁶

Avant-Garde artists¹¹⁷ in São Paulo, and Rio de Janeiro, throughout the first five years of 1960, slowly began to devour international art movements, like New Realism, and Pop.¹¹⁸ The result of this feast produced a new art, one which would be ready to discuss and criticize the 'Brazilian reality' that the dictatorship tried to cover up, one which sought to become a collective singularity, in spite of all discrepant proposals, ideas, or thoughts. Above all, they aimed to integrate Brazil into the international art market with something 'truly Brazilian,' like their predecessors from antropofagic Modernism had tried¹¹⁹ They managed to trespass the limits of their art, be them the physical structure of the painting itself – the framing limit – or the ethical limit of an artist – which prohibited artists to criticize the dictatorship – for many, the forced blindness in face of authority.

In the "Opinião 65" art exhibition¹²⁰ a certain common trait

¹¹⁶ Oiticica, Hélio, "Posição e programa," *Aspiro ao Grande Labirinto*. Rio de Janeiro: Rocco, 1986. 111.

¹¹⁷ Hélio Oiticica, Rubens Gerchman, Antonio Dias, Waldemar Cordeiro, Pedro Escosteguy, Wesley Duke Lee, Lygia Clark, and Sérgio Ferro.

¹¹⁸ New Realism sought to poetically recycle daily life by appropriating reality into paintings through allusive, and not representative, ways. Pop Art was a British art movement from the early fifties, profitably adopted by the Americans in the late 1950s, that incorporated mass media products into their art, mixing fine arts with graphic art, with mass media art, the term itself is already permeated with polemics of all kinds.

¹¹⁹ Favaretto, Celso. "Tropicália: A Explosão do óbvio," *Tropicália: uma revolução na cultura brasileira [1967-1972]*. Basualdo, Carlos (org). São Paulo: Cosac Naify, 2007. 84.

¹²⁰ Agust, 12 – September, 12, 1965, in Rio. Hélio Oiticica's work, "Parangolé," which was backed-up by a live performance of 'Estação Primeira de Mangueira,' was forcefully removed from the building on the allegation that the performance could cause physical damages to the other works; Oiticica was forced to finish his performance on the gardens, outside the Museu de Arte Moderna (MAM). Rubens Gerchman, Antonio Dias, Waldemar Cordeiro, Pedro Escosteguy, and Wesley Duke Lee also exposed their works.

between the artists prevailed above the apparent differences: (re)creating daily urban reality, with “free-eyes,” who saw reality through intellectual distance, as well as the military forced numbness. The return to figure painting, while setting aside abstract characteristics, and the absorption of elements of Pop art, like the appropriation of mass media icons – such as those that television, and propaganda bombard the population with – became evident. The “Opinião 65” exposition was so successful that São Paulo made their response to it, with “Propostas 65.” According to Sérgio Ferro, who exposed works in the “Propostas 65,” the exposition centered itself in the portrait,

Do realismo atual do Brasil[...] [Onde] Inexiste a preocupação com a unidade, a correção, a elegância de linguagem: para dizer o novo, com a crueza necessária, há que esquecer as boas maneiras e as limitações gramaticais.¹²¹

It was also in São Paulo, a year after “Propostas 65,” that Wesley Duke Lee began, along with other friends like Geraldo de Barros, and Nelson Leirner, the Rex group. The group staged many “events” which caused great tumults in the fine arts world of São Paulo throughout its two years of existence.

The “Opinião 65,” and “Propostas 65,” repeated themselves in 66, with the same impact, only to produce the “still unknown tsunami” of the Nova Objetividade Brasileira exposition, that hit Brazilian grounds, in 1967, with impacts that we still measure and account for today. Oiticica warned the public with an introductory text that the artists that were there had the intention of making an art with “1. vontade construtiva geral. 2. tendência para o objeto ao ser negado e superado o quadro do cavalete; 3. participação do espectador (corporal, táctil, visual, semântica, etc.).”¹²² Nothing too surprising for an artist who only two years before had his “Parangolé” removed from the MAM, and now presented a work of art that would change Brazilian cultural sphere, “Tropicália.”

“Tropicália,” as Favaretto puts it, managed to create a Brazilian image that proposed:

¹²¹ Favaretto, Celso. “Tropicália: A Explosão do óbvio,” *Tropicália: uma revolução na cultura brasileira [1967-1972]*. Basualdo, Carlos (org). São Paulo: Cosac Naify, 2007. 85.

¹²² Oiticica, Hélio, “Esquema geral da nova objetividade brasileira,” *Aspiro ao Grande Labirinto*. Rio de Janeiro: Rocco, 1986. 84.

Devoração das imagens conflitantes que encenam uma cultura brasileira. Esta devoração se atribui aos participantes: apropriando-se dos elementos disparatados, justapostos, que formam uma ‘síntese imagética’[...] produzindo a evidenciação do processo de constituição das contradições anunciadas.¹²³

The work consisted of a path that the spectator was invited to stroll across, and the “landscape” beside the path was composed of bananas, araras, sand, exotic plants, and small tents, or “penetráveis,” in which the spectator was invited to enter, the path ended in a tent which had a television set, turned on at all times. The proposition was to show the diverse agents of everyday urban life, all, in one small path; everything, from the slums, to extreme stereotypical portraits of Brazil – such as the bananas, and exotic landscapes – was contained in the path, and as the spectator strolled through it he/she would interpret it through his/her own perspective.

Perhaps like few artists of the early s 1960s, Hélio Oiticica managed to combine various artistic elements into his art, producing a “supra-sensorial”¹²⁴ art, an art which would involve elements of perception such as audition, vision, and tact, as well as the participation of the observer. “Parangolé” was Oiticica’s first major¹²⁵ experiment towards this “supra-sensorial” art, it consisted of several pieces of cloth, sometimes even other materials such as plastic, or latex, sewed together into one gigantic entanglement, very much like a flag, or a kaleidoscopic patchwork quilt. The observer-spectator became a participant-protagonist, and was invited to hear music while trying to put on the “Parangolé.”¹²⁶

¹²³¹²³ Favaretto, Celso. “Tropicália: A Explosão do óbvio,” Tropicália: Uma Revolução na Cultura Brasileira [1967-1972]. Basualdo, Carlos (org): São Paulo, Cosac Naify, 2007. 94.

¹²⁴ Oiticica, Hélio, “Aparecimento do Supra-sensorial,” Aspiro ao Grande Labirinto. Rio de Janeiro: Rocco, 1986. 103.

¹²⁵ I consider the “Parangolé” more significant, or “major,” than the previous experimentation of Oiticica, his “Bólides” (1962) - which consisted of glass-objects the public could manipulate filled with all sorts of materials, condensing a colorful image - because the “Parangolé” is a full object, and needs the spectator’s full integration with it to exist. Unlike the “Bólides,” which can be viewed-admired even when on a table, the “Parangolé” does not “exist,” cannot be viewed-admired if it is exposed lifeless, hung up, or on a table.

¹²⁶ Illustrious fellow citizens like Torquato Neto, and complete strangers, from our dancing Mangueira to the grim subways of New York, dressed the Parangolé.

Oiticica's art and ideas were considered by the "formalist" extremes of his artistic circuit to be underground; he even frequented houses in the slum of Mangueira, when the Northern neighborhood was still viewed as too marginal, and prohibited for laymen like himself. This contact, in complete disharmony with his day-to-day world, made Oiticica's mind run loose with the infinite propositions the slums provided his son-of-an-anarchist cantankerous mind.¹²⁷ Waly Salomão even believes that "*o primeiro Parangolé foi calcado na visão de um pária da família humana que transformava o lixo que catava nas ruas num conglomerado de pertences.*"¹²⁸ It is visible that Oiticica's "Parangolé," as well as his "Tropicália," are very influenced by his pilgrimages to Mangueira. Oiticica sought to go beyond "isms" of any kind with his "Nova Objetividade Brasileira," which is another way of saying a "new view of Brazil." He managed to envision Brazil as a gigantic pluralization of diverse and conflicting agents, roles, routines, and lives; and still show it all in one work of art. He directly influenced the Tropicália, as will later on be mentioned, with his ability to juxtapose the "marginal" with the "elite," the "archaic" with the "modern."

5.3 Cinema: Glauber Rocha's "*Terra em Transe.*"

Toda aquela coisa de Tropicália se formou diante de mim no dia em que eu vi "*Terra em Transe.*"¹²⁹

Brazil's movie production of the 1950s was dominated by two major companies: Atlântida Cinematográfica, which produced the infamous *chanchadas*, destined for the masses, with stars like Oscarito

¹²⁷ Lygia Clark reminds us that the upbringing of Oiticica was a cornerstone for his future engaged art, because his father, José Oiticica, who was an anarchist, decided to educate Hélio himself, until he was 10. This made Oiticica overtly critic of the Rio he lived in, later on in his life. From Clark, Lygia, and Oiticica, Hélio. *Cartas, 1964-74*. Rio de Janeiro: Ed. UFRJ, 1998. 102.

¹²⁸ Gullar, Ferreira (org.) *Arte brasileira hoje: situação e perspectivas*. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1973.

147-152. Which reads, "the first Parangolé was based on the vision of a paria of the human family that transformed the trash it had picked on the streets in a conglomerate of belongings." Author's translation.

¹²⁹ Caetano Veloso in Campos, Augusto de. *Balanço da Bossa e Outras Bossas*. 5th ed. São Paulo: Perspectiva, 1993. 204-205.

and Grande Otelo, and Companhia Cinematográfica Vera Cruz, Brazil's Hollywood, co-founded by Francisco Matarazzo Sobrinho, Mazaropi being their most famous star. Brazilian movie critics of that time borrowed the Spanish word “*chanchada*,” which means rubbish, to name a specific genre that was being produced in Brazil, overflowed with certain “thought-to-be” Brazilian symbols such as: carnival, round-the-clock parties, and the mythical figure of the *malandro* and his unique characteristic of singing everything he says. On the other extreme was the Companhia Cinematográfica Vera Cruz, considered to be the first professional movie studio of Brazil. Vera Cruz sailed prominently through the seas of industrial and economical developments that Brazil, in the early 1950s, was still only beginning to descry.

However, it was also during the early 1950s that a somewhat small group of movie directors began to change Brazilian cinema for ever: Ruy Guerra, Nelson Pereira dos Santos, Carlos Diegues, Luis Carlos Barreto, Alex Viány, and Glauber Rocha. The breakthrough happened when Alex Viány began to disseminate Italian Neorealism films and texts to his colleagues. The style quickly captivated all of them with its anti-Hollywood film content, shot sometimes with non-professional actors, *in loco* (not studio), and with stories about the economic and political conditions of Italy after World War II, with emphasis on the average Italian citizen. Directors like Vittorio de Sica, Roberto Rossellini, Luchino Visconti, and Michelangelo Antonioni became role models for this new cinema (Cinema Novo) that began in Brazil. The film “Rio 40 Graus” (1955) is said to be the first film of the Cinema Novo, as Carlos Roberto de Souza says in his book *A Fascinante Aventura do Cinema Brasileiro* (1981):

Rio, 40 Graus, era um filme popular, mostrava o povo ao povo, suas idéias eram claras e sua linguagem simples dava uma visão do Distrito Federal. Sentia-se pela primeira vez no cinema brasileiro o desprezo pela retórica. O filme foi realizado com um orçamento mínimo e ambientado em cenários naturais: o Maracanã, o Corcovado, as favelas, as praças da cidade, povoada de malandros, soldadinhos, favelados, pivetes e deputados.¹³⁰

¹³⁰ Souza, Carlos Roberto de. *A Fascinante Aventura do Cinema Brasileiro*. São Paulo: Fundação Cinemateca Brasileira, 1981. 65.

The first phase of the Cinema Novo (1960-1964) predominantly focused on underdeveloped issues, usually depicting Brazilian daily life (*Vidas Secas* from 1963), and mythological Northeastern Brazilian figures (*Deus e o Diabo na Terra do Sol* from 1964). The second phase (1964-1968) was marked by a strong criticism against Brazilian developmental policy that began with Juscelino Kubitschek, and now flourished abundantly with the dictatorship; it was in this second phase that the film *Terra em Transe* was made. *Terra em Transe* marks a new beginning for Glauber Rocha, as it is completely different from his previous movies like *Barravento* (1961), and *Deus e o Diabo na Terra do Sol* (1964), which were filmed in the Northeast (*agreste*), and with precarious conditions, whereas *Terra em Transe* was filmed in Rio de Janeiro, and Glauber had more budget to do it.

Terra em Transe ventured even more into this new artistic avant-garde realm that was beginning to burst in the mid-1960s in Brazil. The film's narration is fragmented to a point where we cannot quite distinguish what is past, future, or present; leaving us in a "perpetual present"¹³¹ There is absolutely no central point-of-view in the story which does not revolve around one main character, as the spectator is even confronted with conflicting points-of-view. The film manages to overcome the visual and auditory confinement of traditional cinema, as it is possible to hear something completely dissonant from that which we see, i.e., we hear machine guns firing, yet see two people having some sort of discussion, some scenes repeat themselves, almost in an oneiric déjà vu. It is a somewhat giant woven slip of framed pictures. As Ismael Nery suggests, *Terra em Transe* represents simultaneously diverse roles of the undiscovered Brazil, colonized Brazil, military dictatorship Brazil, and underdeveloped third world Brazil.

The film shows the trajectory of the journalist-poet with political aspirations, Paulo Martins (played by actor Jardel Filho). The starting point of the film is a sort of delirium Paulo is having seconds before his death. The chronology that follows that delirium is all but sane or classical, switching time perspectives, points-of-view, and forms of narration. We witness fragments of Martins' life, from the dawn of his career, where he makes an alliance with politician Porfírio Diaz (played by Paulo Autran), notorious reactionary, up to his death, the only classical form of narration of the entire film, where the story trails its full-circle, and comes back to where it started. Paulo Martins permeates

¹³¹ Sanches, Pedro Alexandre. *Tropicalismo Decadência Bonita do Samba*. São Paulo: Editora Bomtempo, 2000. 40.

all political positions: right, when he associates himself with Diaz, left, when he associates himself with Felipe Vieira, played by José Lewgoy, and even anarchic, when he decides to break loose from everything and everyone, knowing that he could no longer adapt to living in the new Eldorado (fictitious place where everything happens), and drives his car through a military barricade, where he is shot.

Terra em Transe é, pois, político do fim ao começo. Passa a limpo a história republicana do Brasil (e não só ela: conquistadores europeus [...] índios, primeira missa, união da América Latina e ditadores latino-americanos desfilam pelo filme).¹³²

According to Sanches,¹³³ the film's characters allegorically represent such political figures as Carlos Lacerda (Porfírio Diaz), Miguel Arraes (Felipe Vieira), Getúlio Vargas (Porfírio Diaz), and Leonel Brizola (Felipe Vieira), even the military leaders (Porfírio Diaz). The film's narrative, of conflicting points-of-view, with a constant juxtapositioning of unrelated images, following no apparent chronology, became the solid basis for many songs of the Tropicalistas.

5.4 Theatre: Jose Celso Martinez Corrêa's *O Rei da Vela*

Pois com o consumo não só se vende o produto, mas também se compra a consciência do consumidor. (José Celso Martinez Corrêa, 1968)¹³⁴

During the 1950s, Brazilian theatre seemed to be trickling to São Paulo, where two major theatre companies – Teatro Brasileiro de Comédia (TBC),¹³⁵ and Teatro de Arena (Arena)¹³⁶ – were producing the best plays, with the best actors, directors, crew, and equipment. TBC was founded by the entrepreneur Franco Zampari, in 1948. Zampari

¹³² Ibid. 39.

¹³³ Ibid. 36-38.

¹³⁴ Coelho, Frederico, and Cohn, Sergio *Tropicália*. Rio de Janeiro: Beco do Azogue, 2008. 63.

¹³⁵ Brazilian Theatre of Comedy.

¹³⁶ Arena Theatre.

imported distinguished directors and technicians, from all over Italy, to make state of the art modern plays. TBC staged highly successful plays, critically acclaimed, with actors like Cacilda Becker, Paulo Autran, Ruy Affonso, and Sergio Cardoso. Whereas TBC would hire foreign directors to make their best plays, Arena would stage plays directed by Brazilians, and written by Brazilian authors. Arena was founded in 1953, by a group of students of the prestigious Escola de Arte Dramática (EAD),¹³⁷ headed by José Renato, and Geraldo Mateus. Arena managed to surpass the space limitations of the proscenium stage,¹³⁸ preferring arenas, where the stage is surrounded by the audience.

Even though artistically both companies went to opposite directions, TBC favouring a theatre made with sophisticated international standards, and Arena preferring a theatre committed with socio-political issues, their actor's performance was very similar. Both companies' actors followed the teachings of Russian actor-director, Konstantin Stanislavski, who had developed pioneering acting techniques. According to Stanislavski, actors should psychoanalyse their characters, they should think, walk, and talk, like their character; think about the character's infancy, problems, fears, dreams, everything. The stage was composed with objects which were part of the character's life, i.e. photographs, handkerchief, tools, anything which could help describe the character, or characters of the play. The naturalist scenery was extremely detailed, sometimes even having a giant tree placed on the stage. The scenery, plays, and stage of TBC and Arena were indeed very different; however, because they had this same "Stanislavskian" approach of theatre, their presentations still had much in common.

This superficial sameness was only deconstructed many years later, with José Celso Martinez Corrêa, and his co-founded theatre company, Teatro Oficina. José Celso was deeply influenced by the theatre and acting principles formulated by German poet, playwright, and director, Bertold Brecht. A specific concept elaborated by Brecht, called "gestus," was what caught José Celso's attention at first. "Gestus was a physical exteriorization which signified the social condition of the character. The character's clothes, gestures, way of talking, everything, represented his social condition. The "gestus" proposed a criticism of society in general, and not only of individuals, the key factor of the

¹³⁷ School of Dramatic Arts.

¹³⁸ A form of theatre stage. The stage is elevated a few meters above the front row audience. The audience's seats are disposed in a proscenium arch shaped structure. The stage is located in the middle of the proscenium arch. This theatre space creates the *fourth wall* in front of the stage, through which the audience peers.

representation was to determine the social “gestus” of each character. On this sort of representation scene objects and scenery also became “gestus,” where a chair could become a representation of the character’s work place, insignificance, social condition, and the likings. A chair could become an allegory for many scene objects.

This new theatrical approach was the starting point to José Celso’s 1967 project, *O Rei da Vela*. Heavily influenced by the film *Terra em Transe*, José Celso decided to portray Brazil through overtly exaggerated icons, like the carnivalesque overview of Rio’s Christ, and Lagoa Rodrigo de Freitas – background scenery – and the color abusing clothes, all of which Hélio Eichbauer had created. The clever wit and sarcasm of Oswald de Andrade’s text, along with the Dionysian performance elaborated by José Celso, were dynamite. The performance shocked most of its audience, the profanation of the classical boundaries between public and performers forced the audience, throughout the play, to interact, willingly or not, with the actors.

Tocando o espectador, os atores não desrespeitam somente a linha entre palco e platéia, como também a distância física entre estranhos, e sem a qual não subsiste a nossa noção de individualidade.¹³⁹

This anarchic performance, in all its structures – scenery, acting, clothes, text, everything – directly influenced the Tropicalistas, and their anarchic performances.

5.5 Literature: José Agrippino de Paula’s *PanAmerica*.

The ‘Iliad’ told by Max Cavalera.¹⁴⁰

The literary scenery of Brazil in the 1960s was very similar to that of the Vesuvius in the year 79 A.D.: explosive. All literary styles had

¹³⁹ Schwarz, Roberto. “O Pai de Família e Outros Estudos,” *Cultura e Política no Brasil: 1964-69*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2008. 104.

¹⁴⁰ Veloso, Caetano. Introduction. *PanAmérica*. 3rd ed. By José Agrippino de Paula. São Paulo: Editora Papagaio, 2001. 6.

artists of the highest caliber maintaining the quality bar within the highest standards. Amongst fellow poets, João Cabral de Melo Neto, Vinicius de Moraes, Ferreira Gullar, and Carlos Drummond de Andrade gave their fair share of the “99% of transpiration.” Chronicles had such master craftsmen like Fernando Sabino, Carlos Heitor Cony, Rubem Braga, and Sérgio Porto, alias Stanislaw Ponte Preta. Romance writers could summon up the “gang” for a few drinks, and have Jorge Amado, Guimarães Rosa, Érico Veríssimo, Antônio Callado, and Osman Lins underneath the same roof, inside a hot and dirty bar in Ipanema. Short story writers had the chance of walking around the Farol da Barra, for a cool sunset view, in which fellow “co-workers” like Rubem Fonseca, Dalton Trevisan, Clarice Lispector, and Moacyr Scliar would, surprisingly, say nothing, but just ponder about the eternity of all living things.

Brazilian literature lived a prolific decade during the 1960s. Authors at the time were deeply concerned about national issues, and their writings reflected such concern. Writers were very much politically engaged, and some even worked for the government, like Vinicius de Moraes, João Cabral de Melo Neto, and Guimarães Rosa, all of them diplomats. Literary production of the time, quantitatively, was huge, and highly acclaimed¹⁴¹ Literary works maintained their focus on economic, social, and political problems which the nation faced. The grand majority of writers were intellectual bourgeois, who demonstrated a critical approach towards social issues of the time. It was onto this literary scenery that José Agrippino de Paula – a long haired man, with full grown “Jungle Jim” beard, and all the unmistakable hippie accessories – published his book *PanAmerica*, in 1967.

With its raving psychedelic prose, containing explicit references to drugs, sex, mind altered states, and the likings, the book was almost an extended version of Ginsberg’s “Howl.” It was censored a few months after its publication, and soon thereafter became a cult phenomenon. The resonance of *PanAmerica* was tremendous, even though many did not understand the book; some people, like Caetano, were deeply influenced by it. The prose was different, and the sentence structure was a cluster of run-on sentences that produced mammoth-size paragraphs. The book also mentions Che Guevara, the Latin American

¹⁴¹ *The New York Times*, on September 3, 1967, published an article about Clarice Lispector, praising her talent, and describing her as “the Kafka of Latin American fiction.” Salamon, Julie. “An Enigmatic Author Who Can be Addictive.” 2 November 2009. http://www.nytimes.com/2005/03/11/books/11sala.html?_r=2&adxnnl=1&oref=slogin&adxnnlx=1190410388-ADSqGRk9GJuvqkwRgvNAHg.

guerrillas going on, and even the DOPS.¹⁴² Because of its content and context, the book was highly political.

PanAmerica is a story told by a narrator who is never identified, except that he is a Hollywood movie director. This narrator interacts with Hollywood mythological characters like Marlon Brando, Marilyn Monroe, John Wayne, and Burt Lancaster. He describes, and talks about situations, with Hollywood myths, as something ordinary, or some day to day routine activity. What the book did, especially for the Tropicalistas, was break the apparent geographical impossibility of being next to these global icons. Because the story was apparently about banal things that happened between the narrator and these Hollywood icons, it approximated the reader to this absolutely fantastic world. The reader saw people, whom he would only see on the screen, acting in ultra expensive productions, doing their daily routines. This casual scope through which Agrippino portrays these cultural icons, his humanization of the myths, inspired the Tropicalistas to (re)interpret social values through their own vision of anthropophagy, which I will discuss later on.

5.6 Music: Tropicália, or Panis et Circensis

Senti sempre uma imperiosa necessidade de representar simultaneamente os papéis mais diversos, e, quanto maior em número fossem eles, mais eu me sentia estável na minha vida pessoal, e incorporado à vida universal. [...] Eu sou o grande poeta e pai de todos os homens; deverei extinguir todas as possibilidades da forma humana, distribuindo minha alma nos seus inúmeros corpos.¹⁴³

The artists which dominated the musical sales charts could be divided into two spheres: left wing artists, and right wing artists. The majority of left wing artists were rich white intellectuals, who wrote

¹⁴² “Departamento de Ordem Política e Social.” “Department of Public and Social Order.” A government organ whose objective was to control political and social movements of democratic resistance.

¹⁴³ Mendes, Murilo *Recordações de Ismael Nery*. 2nd ed. São Paulo: Editora Giordano, 1996. 84.

songs of protest. The music itself maintained the same type of instrumentation as that of its predecessor, the bossa-nova, but with different lyrics. The lyrics ceased to talk about some beautiful woman who passes, a recurring theme for bossa-novas, and started to talk about social issues, about contesting things, about taking action. Carlos Lyra, Edu Lobo, and Ronaldo Bôscoli are artists who can exemplify this left wing artistic movement. In opposition to that, right wing artists were usually white, young, good-looking, and sellable. They were willing to abide by the laws and stipulations of the military, and prosper by it. Roberto Carlos, Erasmo Carlos, and Wanderléia are perfect examples of right wing artists. Roberto Carlos became famous for making a real good imitation of Elvis, and Erasmo Carlos and Gene Vincent have much more than looks and moves in common, in live performances of the time. The lyrics usually talked about having a blast, going to parties, ‘bird-dogging women,’¹⁴⁴ and the likings. Right wing artists were selling more than the Beatles,¹⁴⁵ while left wing artists had entire songs vetoed by the government censorship.¹⁴⁶

There was a distinct divergence between the “electrified” and the “acoustic,” the former being used by the right wing, and the later by the left wing. The left wing artists envisioned the usage of electric guitar as the death of “pure music,” for music would become an endless mechanic repetition, and lose the blissful purity of its perpetual movement, its capacity to (re)create itself through improvisation, and its essence: the vivid and limpid sound of instruments. Electric guitars were the sort of instrument that an artist would play on either one of two occasions, in carnivals, to make his/her instrument audible while mass hysteria took place, or very, very gently as background music – unless you had some one like Django Reinhardt playing. Then along came the right wing artists with their amplified and distorted electric guitars. It did not take long for the guitar to become an instrument of rebellion, a pirate flag, banner, the condensation of a whole movement. For the right wing artist guitars, and all the futuristic gadgets and effects that came with it, like reverb, and wah-wah, were all a “must.” The right wing artists were considered to be the ones responsible for implementing rock’n’roll in Brazil while the left wing artists were concerned with trying to maintain

¹⁴⁴ An expression of the 1960s, which meant ‘to look for girls,’ or ‘to hunt for girls.’

¹⁴⁵ As was the case of Roberto Carlos when comparing his sales in South America to Beatles sales from the time.

¹⁴⁶ As was the case with Chico Buarque, repeatedly, i.e. “Apesar de Você,” and “Construção,” the former recorded on 1970, and censored that same year, the later recorded on 1971, and censored that same year.

what they believed to be a tradition of the samba, or what they called Brazilian “roots” music. The acoustic guitar was a symbol of protest, of engagé artists, and resistance. The electric guitar was the symbol of rebellion, long hair, jeans, and sun glasses.

Left wing artists joined, or helped to form, the União Nacional do Estudante (UNE), and the Centro Popular de Cultura (CPC),¹⁴⁷ while right wing artists blindly reproduced The Beatles, Elvis, Little Richard, Gene Vincent, and the likings, to insane multitudes of Brazilians that, apparently, were still being baptized into the world of rock’n’roll.¹⁴⁸ Left wing artists were forced to create beautiful elaborate metaphors,¹⁴⁹ and brilliant hidden messages¹⁵⁰ to express themselves. Right wing artists mastered the art of facial and body expression for their live performances, captivating the crowds with their seemingly open heart, and sincerity. The Right wing artists also had a keen commercial tact for words that caused an impact on people, such as: “*saudade*,” “*emoções*,” “*amigo*,” and “*amor*.”¹⁵¹ Common place words with a highly subjective meaning, easily identifiable by people, words which Roberto Carlos has been flavoring his songs, and live performances, sporadically with, for the past 40 years.

The line was drawn, and the battle was being fought. The leftists, or “tradicionalistas,”¹⁵² produced what they called “pure” music, refined music, or music which could not be reproduced by an artist who did not master his instrument. This music had an elaborate instrumentation, its lyrics were comparable to the best poetry of the time, and all the

¹⁴⁷ Important centers for artists, underground rebels, thinkers, and the lot.

¹⁴⁸ Brazilians had already heard rock songs with Tony Campello, Cely Campello, and Sérgio Murilo, in their recordings, dating back to 1957. The similarity between these older rock songs, and the Jovem Guarda songs are very clear. i.e., many song titles from both periods have the word “broto” in them, which is a slang for ‘woman.’ They re-recorded international songs. Their songs were usually recorded in major keys, at the chorus the music would go to the fifth, at the peak of the music it would go to the seventh, where the artists would give their best, only to come back to the first note, and finish the song. However, it was the right wing artists that finally ‘established’ rock’n’roll on the market, as a trend, and style, in Brazil, in the mid-1960s.

¹⁴⁹ As can be seen in the 1970 song “*Valsinha*” composed by Chico Buarque and Vinicius de Moraes, when it says “E ali dançaram tanta dança que a vizinhança toda despertou.” Which means: “And there they danced so much dance, that the whole neighborhood awoke,” author’s translation. But the “dance” itself could be interpreted as ‘having sex.’

¹⁵⁰ As can be seen in the 1973 song “*Cálice*” composed by Chico Buarque and Gilberto Gil, when it says, “Pai/Afaste de mim esse/ Cálice.” Which means: “Father/ Take this chalice away from me.” But in Portuguese ‘chalice’ also reads ‘shut up.’ Because it was also a bible quote from Luke, the song was not banned initially.

¹⁵¹ The first, longing, yearning, the second, emotion, the third, friend, and the fourth, love.

¹⁵² ‘Traditionalists,’ as they were known at the time. Traditionalists because these artists followed a somewhat traditional Brazilian music, the samba, and its successor, the bossa-nova.

instruments, and singers' voice were perfectly audible and discernible. Usually, the quality of this music was highly praised throughout the world.¹⁵³ At the other extreme we had the right wing artists, or the "entreguistas."¹⁵⁴ Their songs talked about enjoying life, beautiful people, and anything that could possibly numb, or soothe, people. The key factor was not the lyrics, far from it, it was the performance, the daring clothes, the screaming, similarly to The Beatles in the beginning of their career. The recordings of the "entreguistas" was highly criticized at the time as having no quality, but the quantity of records they sold doubled that of any "tradicionalista." The guitar's sound was what predominated in the "entreguistas" recordings and, unless they were playing some romantic ballad, was usually meant to be as loud as possible, so as to give buyers the sensation that the song could not be played at a low volume.¹⁵⁵ In nothing were these artists different from their role models, The Beatles, and Elvis, they all sold Napoleonic amounts of records, made thousands of young girls hysterical to the point of fainting, and were also accepted within the elite. The "tradicionalistas" later became known as MPB¹⁵⁶ artists, while the "entreguistas" became known as artists from the "Jovem Guarda".¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ In 1967 Antônio Carlos Jobim (Tom Jobim) recorded with Frank Sinatra. The cover of that album, "Francis Albert Sinatra and Antônio Carlos Jobim," contained a picture of Frank Sinatra and Tom Jobim together. It was the first time that any artist that recorded with Frank Sinatra appeared on the same cover with Sinatra.

¹⁵⁴ As they were known at the time. It can be interpreted as "The Copiers," because they were known for copying international artists and songs. USP's site says that entreguismo is "[u]m dos instrumentos de reprodução da sociedade de elite e de manutenção da acumulação entravada, que é a base material da reprodução da sociedade de elite no Brasil[...]Consiste na desnacionalização sistemática da indústria." USP's Site. "Entreguismo." 1 November 2009. http://www.usp.br/fau/docentes/depprojeto/c_deak/CD/4verb/entregsm/index.html.

¹⁵⁵ Very characteristic of rock'n'roll music, highly used by The Beatles, as in their 1964 song "A Hard Day's Night," which also was the first song of their movie, and album ("A Hard Day's Night"), which started off with George Harrison striking his 12-string electric guitar. This type of sound was the exact opposite of the cool and gentle sound of the leftists.

¹⁵⁶ MPB stands for Música Popular Brasileira, or Brazilian Popular Music.

¹⁵⁷ 'Youth Guard,' the 'Brazilian iê-iê-iê,' as they were pejoratively referred to by the MPBistas, on a reference to the chorus of a Beatles song called "*She Loves You*," which goes "She loves you, yeah, yeah, yeah."

5.7 Music Festivals of the 1960s – Birth of Tropicália

[...] na busca do que chama, “som universal”, o detentor do prêmio de melhor letrista do II Festival, escolheu para acompanhá-lo os Beat Boys. E aí vem com sua “Alegria Alegria,” Caetano Veloso.¹⁵⁸

In 1965 record label managers and television producers came up with a brilliant idea on how to promote the artists of the record labels, and the television network, all at once. It was the year of the first “Festival da Música Popular Brasileira,” – ‘Brazilian Popular Music Festival’ – broadcast by TV Excelsior.¹⁵⁹ The song “*Arrastão*,” by Edu Lobo and Vinicius de Moraes, won the first place. In these festivals the majority of the audience was composed of white university students – the bourgeois, or engagé leftists. The next year, the same festival was broadcast by TV Record, and the song “*A Banda*” by Chico Buarque shared the first place with “*Disparada*” by Geraldo Vandré and Teo de Barros. It is important to note that, even though in these first Festivals the majority of artists, as well as audience, were left wing intellectuals, in that same year, 1966, Roberto Carlos, Erasmo Carlos, and Wanderléia were already such a huge success that TV Record created a program called *Jovem Guarda*,¹⁶⁰ which was presented by the trio aforementioned. For two years the festival’s songs maintained a somewhat naïve, innocent morose tone. They were a direct criticism of the social injustices that happened, but with a clear manichaeist overtone; but that was soon to change.

At the “II Festival de Música Popular Brasileira,” Caetano Veloso won the first place on the category of Best Lyrics, with his song “*Um Dia*,” an unpretentious song about the return of the beloved one, interpreted in a melodramatic form by Maria Odete, who almost spits the last syllables of “*Quero, careço e preciso*,”¹⁶¹ this was a song not very different from the other competing songs, but entirely different from the song Veloso himself would perform the next year. No one

¹⁵⁸ Stage announcer of the III Festival de Música Popular Brasileira, introducing Caetano Veloso, and the Argentinian rock group Beat Boys, who were going to sing “*Alegria Alegria*.” This is considered to be the first Tropicália performance.

¹⁵⁹ An extinct Brazilian TV which not always accepted what the military wanted, and payed the price for it in 1970, the year it was ‘terminated.’

¹⁶⁰ Later on, *Jovem Guarda* also became the name of the movement itself.

¹⁶¹ “Want, necessitate, need.” Author’s translation. A line from the song’s last stanza.

could have imagined that that seemingly ordinary political day, October 21st, 1967, would become the kick-off to the socio-cultural revolution called Tropicália – perhaps not even Veloso. With his song “*Alegria Alegria*,” a wild eliciting of disconnected words and situations, and an Argentinian rock’n’roll band called Beat Boys – famous for playing with Roberto Carlos – to accompany him, Veloso scandalized half of the audience, and lured the other half.

Not even Roberto Carlos, – who presented a song composed by Luis Carlos Paraná, called “*Maria, carnaval e cinzas*” – the exponential figure of Brazilian rock of the time, chose a rock band to accompany him, preferring instead flutes, an acoustic guitar, a male chorus, and the Festival’s own orchestra. It must have taken Veloso a lot of courage to present his song accompanied by a rock band, for it was something inadmissible in these festivals. If he had been the sole performer to disrupt the festival’s normality, perhaps history would have been different, but to close the evening of weird performances, Gilberto Gil came to the limelight accompanied by the ultramodern, yet then unknown, Os Mutantes. Whereas Veloso’s lyrics for “*Alegria Alegria*” was the earth shattering part of his performance, for reasons which I will later on mention, it was the live performance of Gilberto Gil, and Os Mutantes, for Gil’s song “*Domingo no Parque*,” which shocked and bewildered the audience. Gil played an acoustic guitar, something acceptable for the leftists. Beside him, to his right, there was a man playing a “*berimbau*,”¹⁶² which was the physical personification of “roots” music, and to his left there were Os Mutantes, the best example of a rock’n’roll band. The audience could not figure it out, what were they trying to prove? What were they trying to say? Caetano’s song came in fourth, and Gil’s came in second, but the impact they caused is still immeasurable.

1968 was quite a year for the world, some even say it “never ended”: Martin Luther King Jr. was shot, the Vietnam war roared at full throttle, students’ manifestations were happening world-wide. In Brazil, things followed no different path. Students’ rebellions led by UNE were happening in major Brazilian capitals, some of these rebels ominously disappeared, the dictatorship was becoming more and more powerful and brutal. Veloso released his second album, called *Caetano Veloso*, in

¹⁶² A string instrument used as percussion. Very much in fashion for the leftists, after Vinicius de Moraes and Baden Powell recorded “Os Afro-sambas” in 1966, which exalted the black culture, and black ‘roots’ music like capoeira, which uses the berimbau as percussion.

January. In July, a group of artists,¹⁶³ who called themselves tropicalistas, released the “manifest-album” called *Tropicália, ou Panis et Circensis*. Later on that same year, Gil released his second album called *Gilberto Gil*, Os Mutantes released their debut album called *Os Mutantes*, and Tom Zé also released his debut album called *Tom Zé*. All these albums together give a clear blue-print of what was slowly growing inside these artists and in the world around them. They stand out in time as something timeless. They are always fresh, yet always provoke a certain strangeness to the ears. They are the cornerstones of the Tropicália.

Right in the middle of all the political tension going on, the artistic split-up which music faced because of ideological differences, and all the fervent activity going on globally, there appeared this group of friends, who dressed differently, made dissonant music, their performance was even more daring than that of the artists of the Jovem Guarda, and they were dead serious about their craziness. They were neither left wing, nor right wing. They used the guitar – a lot of it – but they made overtly elaborate musical arrangements to accompany it. Most of their lyrics were ambiguous or highly allegorical. We are left to think that each word had been carefully thought about before it was finally written. Each note, each musical movement, everything, right down to the artists’ clothes in their performances,¹⁶⁴ was a planned absurdity.

Although 1968 ended in a tragic form for most Brazilians, with the “Ato Institucional Número 5,”¹⁶⁵ issued on December the 13th, it had been rather prolific for the music sphere, during most of the year. All these ingenious albums, previously mentioned, stand alone for their brilliance, yet, at the same time, complement each other with the best of what each artist had to offer. These albums portray a peculiar characteristic of the Tropicália, the constant dialogue of various musical styles. The lyrical wit of Caetano Veloso, the melodic perfection of Gilberto Gil, the anarchical craziness of Os Mutantes, the sheer brilliance of Capinam and Torquato Neto, the sensuous strident voice of Gal Costa, the in-tune hoarse voice of Nara Leão, and the electrified

¹⁶³ Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil, Gal Costa, Rita Lee, Arnaldo Baptista, Sérgio Dias, Tom Zé, Capinam, Torquato Neto, Nara Leão, Rogério Duprat, Júlio Medaglia, and Damiano Cozzella.

¹⁶⁴ The Tropicalistas had a sagacious publicist-manager, Guilherme Araújo, expert of pamphletary language, slogans, puns, and with a wicked sense of humor; he coined the clause “Divino Maravilhoso.”

¹⁶⁵ Institutional Act Number Five, the AI-5, which, among other things, suspended *habeas corpus* for crimes of political motivation, and closed the National Congress.

“repente”¹⁶⁶ of Tom Zé, combined with the avant-garde experimentalist musical arrangements of Rogério Duprat, Júlio Medaglia, and Damiano Cozzella produced the musical movement known as Tropicália. For some researchers,¹⁶⁷ the Tropicália was more than a musical movement, it became a cultural movement.

More than anything, the Tropicália now presents itself as a much necessary full stop to a sad and morose path which Brazilian music seemed to be trailing during the second semester of the 1960s. Due to the dictatorship, leftwing artists’ main concern was with the commitment of their lyrics, everything else was either disregarded, or not even considered, while the right wing artists were perfectly okay with abiding by the strict rules, as long as their pockets, and champagne glasses, be kept the same way: full. Everything in the music industry was heading towards radical extremes: “entreguistas” were vamping icons like The Beatles, and all the international sellable pop, without any modesty, and making millions out of it, while MPB artists were so focused on their lyrics, that they ended up repeating decade-old song harmonies and instrumentation. There was no point in between, you were either left, right, or left out. Much like the beats, the tropicalistas sensed that the art they did needed a desperate renewal. “O Tropicalismo surgiu mais de uma preocupação entusiasmada pela discussão do novo do que propriamente como um movimento organizado.”¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁶ A folklorical tradition of Brazil, in which artists mingle the declamation of improvised poetry with music. The word “repente” comes from “de repente,” which means “all of a sudden;” to indicate that the verses are improvised ‘all of a sudden.’

¹⁶⁷ Santuza Cambráia Naves, Da Bossa Nova à Tropicália 47. Celso Favaretto, throughout his book Tropicália Alegoria Alegria, and Sylvia Helena Cyntrão, A Forma da Festa – Tropicalismo: A Explosão e Seus Estilhaços, 63.

¹⁶⁸ Said by Gilberto Gil in an interview for Augusto de Campos, from: Campos, Augusto de. O Balanço da Bossa. São Paulo: Perspectiva, 1974. 193. Which reads, “The Tropicalismo emerged more as an enthusiastic preoccupation for the discussion of the new than, properly, as a movement.”

CHAPTER VI

Tropical Ginsberg: The resonance of Allen Ginsberg on the Tropicália

6.1. Speaking to the masses

Mass culture[...]mixes and scrambles everything together, producing what might be called homogenized culture, after another American achievement, the homogenization process that distributes the globules of cream evenly throughout the milk instead of allowing them to float separately on top.(Dwight Macdonald)¹⁶⁹

Time sure judges us all with its own peculiar discrimination, transforming some into angels, others into unknowns, others just aging while living; nevertheless, considering the number of books Ginsberg sold, and the number of records the tropicalistas sold, we can assert that Ginsberg and the Tropicalistas were mass communicators. The thought that their poetry, songs, and work could reach the outermost lands, and all the streets downtown, dazzled and hypnotized young Allen, and the intriguing tropicalistas. In the beginning of their career, Ginsberg and the Tropicalistas were witnessing the birth of mass media, a much handy tool which could fulfill their aspiration of reaching thousands of ears, and eyes. Notwithstanding, mass communication was highly criticized as being something produced by technicians to merely entertain, or numb the masses. “True” art was still something very “refined,” to be kept inside museums, opera houses, libraries, and theatres, and for a select few, definitely not for the masses. Fortunately, Ginsberg and the Tropicalistas were quite enamored of the possibility of reaching the masses – the more the merrier – as they grappled fiercely against this dated elitist conception of art. What else is “refined art,” but the remaining dead shadow of the bourgeoisie? To have the masses in awe because of you, that is the brilliance.

¹⁶⁹ Mcdonald, Dwight. “A Theory of Mass Culture.” Mass culture, the popular arts in America Rosenberg, B. and White, D.M. Glencoe: The Free Press, 1957. 62.

However, the onus of this mass acceptance was a stigmatizing process which Ginsberg and the Tropicalistas gradually began to undergo. Ginsberg was criticized for his populace literature, heavily garnished with street slang and curses, unrestricted abuse of lascivious language, and complete disregard for traditional standards of poetry, as having no visual meter or rhyme. It would be almost impossible to find a unifying central idea in “Howl,” one which could resolve all the tensions contained in it, as it talks about almost everything that bothered, inspired, and provoked Ginsberg; a celebration of himself. As for the tropicalistas, they were criticized, amongst other things, for their pamphletary language, viewed as unfit for a lyric. The academic opposition of critics, who had transformed poetry into a scientific artform for few initiates, – New Criticism – that Ginsberg faced, affirmed that what he did was typewriting, not writing. The Tropicalistas were accused of being “entreguistas” by musicians – MPB¹⁷⁰ artists – who came from an elite musical heritage, the bossa-nova.

Ginsberg and the Tropicalistas were criticized for having banalized their art, while producing it for the masses. However, the art they produced was at no point an unthought act, a lucky million dollar mistake, or whatsoever; on the contrary, it was the sum of countless precision acts, and exhaustive brainstorming, from minds coming from diverse areas. It is very important to point out that Ginsberg and the Tropicalistas were very well informed of their own times, about what was going on, they were highly educated, and knew quite well the path they wanted to trail, and the goals they wanted to reach. Ginsberg and the Tropicalistas came from solid middle-class families, which could afford good schools to their future brilliant kids.

Ginsberg’s pursuit of a new language, an “elegy for the generation,”¹⁷¹ violently breaking off from “traditional” academic poetry, almost repeated itself when the Tropicalistas first emerged during the late 1960s in Brazil, yearning for a “universal sound,” which, in turn, led to fervent ideological and musical clashes. Ginsberg was censored, and went to court under the charge of obscenity, and Gilberto Gil had his song, “Questão de Ordem,” censored on the “III Festival Internacional da Canção.” Hélio Oiticica, in a 1968 article for *Jornal da Manhã*,¹⁷² while commenting on the chaotic presentation of Caetano

¹⁷⁰ Música Popular Brasileira

¹⁷¹ Morgan, Bill. *I Celebrate Myself*. New York: Penguin Books. 2006. 203.

¹⁷² entitled “A Trama da Terra que Treme (O sentido de vanguarda no grupo baiano)”

Veloso, and Os Mutantes, in the same Festival,¹⁷³ made a very pertinent insight, not only about the Festival, but also about the illogical situation which art was going through:

Esses festivais são como os salões de arte moderna e bienais: velhas estruturas que se tornam cada vez mais acadêmicas e sufocam qualquer inovação.¹⁷⁴

Oiticica criticizes those who approach art by tracing a distinct line between “refined taste,” and “bad taste,” something quiet common back in 1950s, and 1960s, when there was still a fading distinction between “refined” art, and “bad” art. For art to renew itself, Oiticica believed, these two distinct styles had to collide, and cease to exist. Whatever came out of that shock would be the necessary destiny of art. As a result of this shock, the world came to know Ginsberg and the Tropicalistas.

Perhaps the first similarity that blossoms when we look at the initial bursts of Ginsberg and the Tropicalistas was their ability to make an “elite” art reach the “marginal,” yet greater, portion of society. Author James J. Farrell reminds us that:

[w]ith the City Light Press and bookstore, and public readings in bars and coffeehouses, Ferlinghetti¹⁷⁵ and the Beats began to change the way people related to poetry. They tried to make their populist poetry popular by bringing it out of the academy and into the streets.¹⁷⁶

The same relation can be seen when UFBA¹⁷⁷ professor, Evelina Hosiel, comments on the Tropicália. She suggests that it managed to:

¹⁷³ Caetano sang “É Proibido Proibir” and was booed.

¹⁷⁴ Coelho, Frederico, and Cohn, Sergio *Tropicália*. Rio de Janeiro: Beco do Azogue, 2008. 146. Which reads, “These festivals are like the modern art galleries and bienais: old structures that become each time more academic and suffocate any innovation.” Author’s translation.

¹⁷⁵ Author’s note: Farrell refers to Lawrence Ferlinghetti, owner of City Lights Bookstore.

¹⁷⁶ Farrell, James J. *The Spirit of The Sixties: Making Post War Radicalism*. New York: Routledge Publishing. 1997. 62.

¹⁷⁷ Universidade Federal da Bahia (Federal University of Bahia)

Deslocar a arte do espaço no qual sempre existiu como objeto sacralizado – museu, biblioteca etc.[sic] – para integrá-la no cotidiano, nas ruas, nas praças públicas,¹⁷⁸

Or in other words, reach the masses. This desacralizing process of producing a much refined and “sacralized” art, for the masses, was definitely a giant step into uncharted lands, which took a lot of guts. After all, to mix the “marginal” with the “elite” was all but a calm and easy thing to do.

To bring the “elite” to the “marginal” is the same as releasing an innocent ten year old Manhattan school girl, fresh out of a fifth-grade class, into some grotesque, and smelly, Harlem street; it is quite grim. Dr. Frankenstein, the “arian,” suddenly has a horrific epiphany: his creation, the monster, the untouchable, can easily overpower him. That is to bring the “elite” to the “marginal,” and that is why the elite panics with the mere thought that it could happen. The suturing connection between the New Criticism and the MPB artists is quite evident when we analyze what they were trying to maintain: traditional elitist standards of art. The New Criticism critics could not conceive that a new literary movement and cultural revolution were erupting with every “marginal” stanza that Ginsberg made and said, just as the MPB artists could not admit that the “marginal” sound the Tropicalistas were doing would become a musical and cultural revolution.

The poetry analysis conducted by the New Criticism has left us with a very elaborate research into poetry on account of having approached art as science. However, this analysis becomes extremist when it relegates to a second plan the importance of the author, and the contextualization of his/her art, while trying to create a pantheon of poems flying around through time with no author to call creator. God might know what critics would say about “The Hollow Men,” had it been penned by Hitler with another title, “Mein Kampf.” To approach poetry as science is to overlook its essence, which can hardly be described by words. If we were to approach the poetry of Ginsberg and the Tropicalistas’ songs strickly for the purpose of textual analysis, we would probably be grasping less than half of what Allen Ginsberg and

¹⁷⁸ Hoisel, Evelina. *Supercaos: Os Estilhões da cultura em Panamérica e Nações Unidas*. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1980. 41. Which reads, “Dislocate art from the space in which it always existed as a sacralized object – museum, library, etc. – to integrate it in the daily life, on streets, public parks.” Author’s translation.

the Tropicália were about.

As for the MPB artists, they became so profoundly tangled with the engageé music scenario of the 1960s that they loathed any song whose lyric did not talk about any form of commitment, involvement, or participation in the artistic struggle against military oppression, and any artist who did not dress like, talk like, and act like an MPB artist, a burnt out replica of the bossa-nova artist. The song catalog of the MPB artists from the mid-1960s onwards is quite respectable, and influential, i.e. Edu Lobo's, and Carlos Lyra's, but the sound of their songs still had that same feeling of the then decade old bossa-nova. The cool beat and feeling of the bossa-nova songs, the first 'elite' samba of Brazil, had been revolutionary during the late 1950s, and early 1960s, but almost a decade later the cool became common, and the beat repetitive. MPB artists were completely adverse to pop music, preferring, rather, the popular samba. As we have seen, they criticized the Tropicalistas, calling them entreguistas, for bonding with North American and British rock'n'roll, while they bonded with North American Jazz.

New Criticism and MPB artists criticized exactly the same thing, the incapability of the beats and tropicalistas of maintaining an elitist cultural tradition in their respective arts. Ginsberg's art and the Tropicalistas' art were transgressive in their challenge against their predecessors, – New Criticism, and Música Popular Brasileira – and revolutionary in their devouring predecessors, – Romantics, and bossa-nova – and transforming it into something new. Through their art, Ginsberg and the Tropicalistas managed to captivate the masses, and irritate the bourgeoisie, while promoting a breakthrough in mixing “elite” art and “marginal” art. The dying traditions to which the elite held itself with hands and teeth had its days counted, proving that art will always renew itself, whether we want it, grasp it, like it, or live to see it.

6.2. The new becomes old, the old becomes new

As the present now
Will later be past
The order is
Rapidly fadin'[...]
For the times they are a-changin'¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁹ Dylan, Bob. “The Times They Are A’ Changing.” *The Times They Are A’ Changing*. Sony, 1967. Long-Play.

Ginsberg and other beat writers, already in 1945, were collectively creating a somewhat philosophical approach to life, and art, which they called “New Vision.”¹⁸⁰ This “new vision” later evolved into the “flow of consciousness” – first thought, best thought – way of writing which some beats, like Burroughs, Ginsberg, and Kerouac, used. They encouraged each other to let their consciousness flow, and write the first thought that came to their mind. This “flow of consciousness” produced the unique characteristic of beat literature, its jazzlike capability of perpetual freshness, almost a constant improvisation. A decade later the Tropicalistas were also looking for a “discussion of the new,”¹⁸¹ wanting to make music for the “universal listener,” something brand new with the latest gadgets and effects. The songs had a spontaneous sort of tone, as can be heard in the beginning of “Tropicália,” when the percussionist, Dirceu, improvised a line or two.

Quando Pero Vaz Caminha descobriu que as terras brasileiras eram férteis e verdejantes, escreveu uma carta ao rei: Tudo que nela se planta, tudo cresce e floresce. E o Gauss na época gravou.¹⁸²

American poetry was definitely getting better by the book after 1945; yet it was also becoming each time more “cooked.”¹⁸³ As for Ginsberg, poetry had to be as raw as possible. This was a unique characteristic of Ginsberg, his demotic speech capable of covering a whole constellation of subjects in just one stanza. It took him a while to get it, but when he finally got it, it never ceased to improve. “Howl” (1956) was Ginsberg’s first poem to contain a characteristic personal voice and sentiment spilled all over it; it is very different from “Song” (1954), “Wild Orphan” (1952), or even “Supermarket in California” (1955), and “Sunflower Sutra” (same year).

¹⁸⁰ Morgan, Bill. *I Celebrate Myself*. New York: Penguin Books. 2006. 59.

¹⁸¹ As previously mentioned. Curiously enough there are also many similarities with the movements “Nova Objetividade Brasileira,” and the “Cinema Novo.”

¹⁸² Which means “When Pero Vaz Caminha discovered that the Brazilian lands were fertile and verdant, [he] wrote a letter to the king: Everything that in her we plant, everything grows and blossoms. And the Gauss of the time recorded.” (Author’s translation) Gauss was the sound engineer of the recording.

¹⁸³ A term used by American poet Robert Lowell to define his poetry, so as to say that it was carefully tailored for as long as it took.

“Song” and “Wild Orphan” follow a similar breathing, flow, and text structure; “Song” ends with: “I always wanted to return to the body where I was born,” a quite typical yearning of a solitary orphan. “Supermarket in California” and “Sunflower Sutra” seem to be too ornamented, in search of something intangible. The mystical and aimless wandering in “Supermarket in California,” as if Ginsberg wants Whitman to read him his horoscope,¹⁸⁴ seems to permeate “Sunflower Sutra,” which, in turn, possesses a somewhat “Baudelairian” opium gaze of a sunflower,¹⁸⁵ taking the reader for a ride through Ginsberg’s stupefied mind. As mentioned before, it took Ginsberg many years before he could discover his poetic voice.

“Howl” was written during 1955 and 1956. Its conception was an arduous process for Ginsberg, with many trials and errors, editing, cutting, and lapidation, until it was finally ready, and no doubt worth it. With “Howl” Ginsberg finally found his own voice, his own celebrations and damnations. Within “Howl” we see a fragmented writer – he has been hacked, humiliated, beaten up, and shattered. He had seen “the best minds of his generation destroyed by madness.”¹⁸⁶ What generation? A generation of atomic kids who were taught that one day they could be playing in the play-ground, and all of a sudden a giant Soviet airplane may appear hovering a 30 kiloton bomb just a few miles away. Atop all that, what could a Jewish homosexual, with a mother in the mental asylum possibly write about?

“Howl” cooked inside Ginsberg for 30 years, the bow was drawn, the line was pulled, and the arrow fired; bull’s eye. All its strophes are errants, as they saunter through the poem, back and fourth, making it seem that each strophe carries a vague echo of all other strophes. T.S. Eliot’s conception “*de uma poesia impessoal, abolindo a primeira pessoa, o ‘eu’ do autor,*”¹⁸⁷ which dominated most of the poetry being made in the 1950s in the United States,¹⁸⁸ was instantly dismissed as Ginsberg started “Howl” with the first-person singular, an acknowledgment to Whitman. “Howl” must have sounded like a grotesque and prolonged affirmation of foul language, and bad poetry,

¹⁸⁴ “Where are we going, Walt Whitman?”

¹⁸⁵ “Look at the Sunflower, he Said, there was a dead gray shadow against the sky, big as a man, sitting dry on top of a pile of ancient sawdust”.

¹⁸⁶ Previously mentioned.

¹⁸⁷ Willer, Claudio. “Beats & Rebelião” L&PM Editores Ltda. *Alma Beat*. Porto Alegre: L&PM, 1984. 40. Which reads, “of an impersonal poetry, abolishing the first person, the ‘I’ of the author.”

¹⁸⁸ Perhaps the extreme of this can be seen with e. e. Cummings, as all the “I”’s contained in his poetry are written “i”.

for older poets, but it was exactly what the masses of young Americans wanted to hear, a contained scream. Ginsberg was ready to assume all the “marginals,” and praise them.

“Howl” was a celebration of something old – Whitman’s call for future poets – through the way Neal Cassady used to talk – the “hippest” way of talking. It was a trumpet call over an empty field, which sprang forth a generation of contesters, and protesters. With “Howl” Ginsberg managed to make his “elegy for the generation,” as it became what every young transgressor of Ginsberg’s time was talking about, selling thousands of copies. This elegy is also a love confession to the poet’s predecessors – Blake, Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Whitman, and many others – while he rants about everyday occurrences of his life. What he assumed, a generation of Americans also assumed later on. Ginsberg had finally mastered his art, and matured his soul and mind to the point of producing a highly refined poem, with lines like “angelheaded hipsters burning for the ancient heavenly connection to the starry dynamo in the machinery of night,” and still very much in touch with street English, as in “the whole boatload of sensitive bullshit!”

The same ability to mingle the traditional with the modern, that Ginsberg mastered and portrayed in his poetry, can be seen in songs of the Tropicália. However, it also took the tropicalistas a long time to attain this ability. Caetano and Gil, somewhat mentors of the Tropicália, released three albums (Caetano one, and Gil two), which sound not very different from the amounting sameness which the majority of Brazilian musicians seemed to be producing, before the album manifest *Tropicália ou Panis et Circensis*. Caetano’s first album, *Domingo*, sounds as a one-way street to Bahia. A homage to an aging samba with a crippled walk, it manages only to authenticate Caetano’s immaturity as a musician; Caetano himself called the album “sub-bossa-nova.”¹⁸⁹ The album has no electric guitars in it. On the other hand, Gil’s first two albums – *Salvador 1962-1963* and *Louvação* – already present a musician with excellent abilities, capable of creating rare gems such as “Roda,” with its involving rhythm, and brilliant harmony, but still timid, and chaste, if we are to consider such songs from his next album as “Questão de Ordem,” and “Marginália 2,” when Gil finally electrified his songs and performance.

Many of the tropicalistas believed that the last breakthrough in Brazilian music had occurred with the song “Chega de Saudade,” a

¹⁸⁹ Caetano Veloso Online. “Contracapa do Disco Domingo.” 11 December 2009. http://www.caetanoveloso.com.br/sec_discogra_textos.php?language=pt_BR&id=1.

Vinicius de Moraes lyric, for a Tom Jobim arrangement, to be performed by João Gilberto. The song was magnificent, completely different from everything else, and seemed to point to a new horizon for Brazilian music. Because the first stanza of the song talked about suffering, “*vai minha tristeza e diz a ela que sem ela não pode ser,*”¹⁹⁰ it began with a minor key, something quite rare in those days, so as to give a morose tone to it. João Gilberto’s voice was almost a whisper, also something never heard before in samba. Because of the large orchestration of samba songs, which made them sound like a street parade, or carnival song, samba singers sang their songs with all the air from their lungs. “Chega de Saudade” was like spring for young musicians, who rejoiced and sang along with it endlessly; it seemed to tell them that a new musical movement was erupting, which indeed was.

“Chega de Saudade” was the cornerstone of the bossa-nova. Within the song lied all the ideals of the movement, musical simplicity, romantic lyrics, a soft way of singing, and a cool sound which still today mesmerizes artists from all corners of the world. The song was the result of the pilgrimage white intellectuals did to the slums to learn how to play the samba. Slowly the samba began an “elitizing” process, lyrics began to change, as previously mentioned,¹⁹¹ and the samba listener was no longer the slum inhabitant, but the rich folk from Rio’s South zone. The samba stopped talking about the daily life of the sambista,¹⁹² a life of misery, pain, and suffering, and began to talk about the life of the elite, and its struggle to find love, to fight against military oppression, and how to doze off and watch the sunset; it was the beginning of the decadence.

The tropicalistas sensed that decadence, and decided that it was time to put an end to it. Just like Ginsberg, who thought that poetry needed to trail different paths, the tropicalistas decided that what music needed was not another Chico Buarque, or Edu Lobo, and definitely not another samba. Instead, they believed that what Brazilian music needed was a “universal sound” to its songs, to integrate world music into local music. While the MPB artists ran away from electronic gadgets, and mass communication, like Satan from the cross, the tropicalistas decided to embrace it. They had open arms, and hearts, to The Beatles, Bob Dylan, Jimi Hendrix, and rock’n’roll, yet, also for bossa-nova, Latin American rhythms, and African music. Tropicalistas delved into artists

¹⁹⁰ “Go, my sadness, and tell her that without her it won’t be”

¹⁹¹ In the chapter about the Tropicália.

¹⁹² Samba song writer.

like Vicente Celestino,¹⁹³ Catulo da Paixão Cearense,¹⁹⁴ and Carmen Miranda,¹⁹⁵ which many MPB artists had set aside, or disconsidered.

Whereas Ginsberg was inspired by Whitman, and wrote like Cassady spoke, thus welding the traditional with the modern, the tropicalistas devoured the archaic and produced the modern. According to Celso Favaretto,

[a]s canções tropicalistas resultam quase sempre da mescla de ritmos brasileiros tradicionais (urbanos ou folclóricos) com ritmos que foram difundidos pelo rádio, disco, televisão e cinema: samba, rumba, baião, ponto de macumba, rock, bolero.¹⁹⁶

This amalgamation of a vast reference list into their universal sound depicts the very essence of the tropicalistas: a familiar song that sounds strange. Some songs combined the archaic sound of the macumba¹⁹⁷ with the ultra modern amplifier exploding Jimi Hendrix¹⁹⁸; they mixed José de Alencar and Gonçalves Dias¹⁹⁹ with Stockhausen.²⁰⁰ Brusquely, the refined sound of the MPB became an aging bohemian, solitarily sipping its final days in some long forgotten bar, as the clash between “electric” and “acoustic” roared. Indeed the Tropicália appeared, perhaps above everything else, as something new, different, dissonant, a parody of the tropicalistas themselves, and their time.

Cláudio Willer says that, “[t]odo movimento de ruptura e vanguarda é também, ao mesmo tempo, a retomada de uma tradição.”²⁰¹ If we are to consider this phrase while analyzing Ginsberg’s poetry²⁰² and the Tropicália, it proves itself to be quite right.

¹⁹³ Caetano sings his “Coração Materno” in “Tropicália ou Panis et Circensis.”

¹⁹⁴ One of his hits is called “Luar do Sertão.” One of Caetano’s verses for his song “Tropicália” reads, “a cabeleira esconde atrás da verde mata o luar do sertão.”

¹⁹⁵ Who most tropicalistas are confessed admirers.

¹⁹⁶ Favaretto, Celso. *Tropicália: Alegoria, Alegria*. São Paulo: Kairos, 1979. 121.

¹⁹⁷ As in “Batmacumba,” which utilizes a bongo, a percussion instrument very characteristic of the macumba.

¹⁹⁸ The guitar distortion, and wha-wha effects, which Hendrix loved so much, are ever so present throughout the Tropicália songs, like “Panis et Circensis,” “Minha Menina,” “Batmacumba.”

¹⁹⁹ Favaretto, Celso. *Tropicália: Alegoria, Alegria*. São Paulo, Kairos, 1979. 74.

²⁰⁰ German avant-garde composer of the twentieth century, one of the pioneers of electronic music.

²⁰¹ Willer, Claudio. *Geração Beat*. Porto Alegre: L&PM. 2009. 44.

²⁰² Considering that his poetry was an intrinsic part of the beat movement.

Ginsberg was the anti-Christ for the Formalists and New Criticism, just as the MPB artists saw the Tropicália as the worst thing that could ever happen to Brazilian music. Ginsberg praised Whitman, the tropicalistas utilized Gonçalves Dias, and José de Alencar. Ginsberg certainly wanted to ‘celebrate himself,’ and did so by reading everything his hands could grasp, – from the bible to Kerouac – digesting all those words, and creating his ‘elegy for the generation,’ as though having the masses speak through him. The tropicalistas performed a ritual of cultural anthropophagy, as they did much more than just devour a specific artist, i.e. Hendrix, they ate the entire culture surrounding such artist – the guitar sound, clothes, behavior, and stage act of Hendrix – and produced something completely different, yet still resembling Hendrix, a tupi-Hendrix.

Through these processes, Ginsberg and the tropicalistas managed to disrupt the cultural activities of their time. By promoting a counterculture that suggested that a new depiction of reality was necessary, one which could talk about a world that began its ambiguous globalization, Ginsberg and the tropicalistas paved the way for a new language, fragmented, illogical, with a twisted sense of time, and a bizarre juxtaposition of images. The world was changing ever so fast, and a new world order molded behavior, fashion, economics, politics, geography, arts, everything. Through their art, Ginsberg and the tropicalistas managed to leave for future generations the least factual, but, perhaps, most precise, depiction of the brutal reality of their days.

6.3. Kaleidoscopic Reality: Splinters, Chaos, and The New World

Meus olhos convergem para
todas as coisas
Que de todos os lados
convergem para mim.
(5-6) (Murilo Mendes)²⁰³

The conflicting and threatening societies that surrounded Ginsberg and the tropicalistas served as ample material for inspiration. They were able to capture an essence of their changing generation in

²⁰³ Mendes, Murilo. “Pirâmide,” *Poesia Completa e Prosa de Murilo Mendes*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Nova Aguilar, 1994. 265

their poetry and songs. The atomic presidents, and five-star generals had made life simple; you either played their game, or perished, thus reducing all opposition to bits and pieces, while they assured that it was for a greater cause. Radical times call for radical actions, and so it was with Ginsberg and the tropicalistas; their art was radical and countercultural. Ginsberg's poems reflect his struggle against the death of the individual, forced into an enslaving job, and overpowered by a crushing socio-political reality, and his fear of the death of humanity, wiped out by the atomic mushroom. "Ginsberg and the Beat generation were especially attentive and appreciative of everyday life around them, and they juxtaposed imminent doom with the immanent vitality of their poetry."²⁰⁴ Meanwhile, the tropicalistas lived in a country recently usurped by a military dictatorship and ready to open their horizons for a massive foreign investment; their songs reflect such tense surroundings:

O procedimento inicial do tropicalismo inseria-se na linha da modernidade: incorporava o caráter explosivo do momento às experiências culturais que vinham se processando; retrabalhava, além disso, as informações então vividas como necessidade, que passavam pelo filtro da importação.²⁰⁵

To reflect such turbulent times, Ginsberg's poems and the tropicalistas' songs had to be contradictory, illogical, fragmented, and sarcastic. Ginsberg was witnessing and participating in the birth of the counterculture, at the same time that the United States began to live the ages of extremes, breeding billionaires, and pharaonic corporations. The tropicalistas were riding the counterculture wave at its peak, the flower power seemed to be spreading as an uncontrollable virus, and revolutions erupted worldwide; perhaps Jim Morrison was right, "they got the guns but we got the numbers."²⁰⁶ There were sparks on every corner, things seemed to be changing with an ultra-sonic speed, as the 1950s and 1960s youngsters were proving that the individual had the power of the social.

²⁰⁴ Farell, James J. *The Spirit of The Sixties: Making Post War Radicalism*. New York: Routledge Publishing, 1997. 53.

²⁰⁵ Favaretto, Celso. *Tropicália: Alegria, Alegria*. São Paulo, Kairos, 1979. 31.

²⁰⁶ verse from song "Five to One."

The arts – cinema, fine arts, theatre, literature, and music – appeared to be converging one into the other, trespassing academic boundaries. The films directed by Glauber Rocha, Jean-Luc Godard, and Michelangelo Antonioni were sometimes made with almost no script, but, instead, with a poem which the actors read and acted out as best as they could. The exhibits of Hélio Oiticica, the events of Andy Warhol, and Marcel Duchamp's *Etant Donnés*²⁰⁷ made it seem that the creation of art was finally being removed from the hands of artists. Theatre companies like Teatro Oficina, Living Theatre, and Open Theatre argued that the boundaries between stage and audience were to be at once eliminated. Books like José Agrippino de Paula's "*PanAmérica*," Julio Cortázar's "*Hopscotch*,"²⁰⁸ and Tom Wolfe's "*Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*,"²⁰⁹ presented the reader to a whole new different literary scope, with different ways of reading the same book, and blurring the already invisible limit between fiction and reality. Musicians, and bands, like John Cage,²¹⁰ The Beatles, and The Doors,²¹¹ whether through live performances, video-clips, or albums, brought musicians one step closer to the audience.

Ginsberg and the tropicalistas were very much "in tune" with what was going on in the art world, creating poems and songs which depicted these explosive and chaotic times. Reality had been ransacked so savagely by the modernists that it was reduced to nothing more than splinters for the 1950s and 1960s. Such splinters are very well portrayed by Ginsberg and the tropicalistas, especially in their juxtaposition of unrelated words. In both cases the juxtaposition is made between conflicting images, which represent diverging ideas and ideals. In Ginsberg's case the juxtaposition is between the words "hydrogen" and "jukebox," found in the poem "*Howl*." As with the tropicalistas, the juxtaposition can be seen in the song written by Caetano Veloso, and Gilberto Gil, "*Batmacumba*," between the words "batman" and

²⁰⁷ A massive wooden door with two peep holes, which invite the observer to become participant.

²⁰⁸ Which invites the reader to read the book through several different forms, i.e. only odd numbered chapters.

²⁰⁹ Wolfe's account of the journey of the bus Furthur across the United States. The bus' pilot, Ken Kesey, along with the crew, Merry Pranksters, distributed LSD during their trip, and promoted probably the first raves ever. A pioneering work of the New Journalism.

²¹⁰ Famous for his 1952 composition in three movements called "4,33", in which no notes are played. The noise of the audience is what constitutes the composition.

²¹¹ Famous for live performances that grew out of control. Sometimes the lead singer of the band, Jim Morrison, went off stage to sing and dance with the audience, or wailed from the limelight: "what are you going to do about it?"

“macumba.” In both cases the juxtaposition reflects precisely the kind of society which the author(s) lived in, and how they experienced such chaotic times.

Ginsberg’s line reads “listening to the crack of doom on the hydrogen jukebox.” We are left to think that the speaker is about to hear the beginning of the end, through a jukebox. Ginsberg plays with two antagonizing ideas: that of listening to a jukebox, – associated with a leisure activity – and hearing the explosion of a hydrogen bomb – a macabre feeling. The jukebox, in 1956, year of “Howl”’s first publication, was an object associated with the youth, with rock’n’roll, cars, greasers, noisy restaurants reeking of testosterone and leaking Brando imitators. As for the hydrogen bomb, it epitomized the fear culture, and made the ordinary American think about instant death. By juxtaposing these two words Ginsberg dissects the American society of the 1950s, on one extreme lies the rebellious youth, powerful, colorful, and ready to change the world while listening to the jukebox, and at the other extreme, the cold and necrotic advances of science and technology, whose latest achievement was the hydrogen bomb, personification of Moloch, Ginsberg’s generation.

The lyric for the song “Batmacumba” goes as follows: “Batmacumba iê-iê Batmacumba oba.” The song binds the comic book superhero Batman to the ancestral religion-music of Brazilian slaves, “*macumba*.” Caetano and Gil juxtapose two words that represent two distinct cultural references, that of the American cultural industry, an emerging international market in Brazil, represented by comic books, – very keenly portrayed by the somber “Dark Knight” –and a traditional Brazilian cultural element, and practice, which began with slaves.²¹² By placing these discrepant elements together they managed to typify Oswald’s anthropophagy brilliantly. As the song unfolds itself, one syllable is taken out of the lyric after every bar, – or measure – thus making “batmacumba iê-iê batmacumba oba” become only the initial “ba” in the exact middle of the song. Through this syncretist process, these unrelated images become one, the international and the national are bound through the phoneme “ba”. The “iê-iê” – referring to the Beatles song “She Loves You” – and the “oba” – referring to the slang that many Brazilian rockers used to say – become the same thing.

²¹² Coincidentally also referred to as ‘witchcraft,’ or ‘black magic.’

By intentionally fusing these diverse elements, “Batmacumba” suggests that products of the multinational culture industry like Batman and rock have been “Brazilianized” and, conversely, that Afro-Brazilian religion is central to Brazilian modernity and not to a folkloric vestige of a premodern past.²¹³

Another characteristic of the 1950s and 1960s which can be seen in Ginsberg’s poems and songs from the tropicalistas is the lack of “traditional” chronology which the world began to experience. With the advent of television, in which live programs were broadcast over a large geographical area, giving the spectator the sensation of watching someone who is not really there, the traditional notion of time-space received another blow, perhaps as brutal as that given by Einstein’s Theory of Relativity. With global live transmission of events – the Vietnam war being the first televised war in history – things got even more weird, as Americans could see American soldiers dying in Vietnam, Vietnamese civilians dying, and all the monstrous reality of wars, sitting comfortably on their couches, back in their hometowns.

In the meantime, in Brazil, the country had just built its capital in the heart of the land, sparing no expenses, thus opening its arms for foreign investments of all kinds. But the radiant dream of “progress” and “order” was soon obscured by the omnipotent force of the military. Thousands disappeared, thousands were taken in broad day light, beaten up, and released in the darkest hour of the night, and other thousands were intimidated, subdued, punished in the most inhuman manners, and silenced. Day to day life seemed to be a stream of inconclusive acts, with no apparent chronology, and tomorrow’s skies seemed starless.

This lack of chronology can be seen very clearly in Ginsberg’s poem, “America.” In it, Ginsberg exposes his complaints, praises, and frustrations, in face of “America,” as well as misleading thoughts which America somewhat imposed upon him. The poem follows no apparent chronology, as the only time reference we have is in the second line, which reads: “America two dollars and twentyseven cents January 17, 1956.”²¹⁴ From there on, Ginsberg begins a frenetic listing of things and situations – assertions, demands, and curses – but with no noticeable

²¹³ Dunn, Christopher. Brutality Garden: Tropicalia and The Emergence of a Brazilian Counterculture. North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press, 2001. 128.

²¹⁴ Ginsberg, Allen. Howl and other poems. 40th ed. Ed. Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Nancy J. Peters. San Francisco: City Lights Bookstore, 1992. 39.

connection, only a stream of wild rap. A break seems to happen between lines 46 and 47. As Ginsberg changes his scope, no longer is he complaining, or praising, but addressing, and when he says, “I’m addressing you,” America is implicit. The second part of the poem gives it a social perspective, Ginsberg is no longer a solitary complainer, but acts as a spokesman, as he criticizes the obsession of many Americans with reading *Time* magazine. On line 58 he even compares himself to America, “It occurs to me that I am America,” only to finish off this second part of the poem, in the next line (59), by saying, “I am talking to myself again.” With this line we are baffled, and left to think that this entire second part was not much more than a delirium.

The poem’s third and concluding part is where Ginsberg mentions the paranoia which America makes him suffer, as it begins with “Asia is rising against me.” It is also in the third part where Ginsberg sounds his protests, as in “free Tom Mooney.”²¹⁵ The third part also mentions the Russians, the communist hunt and the colonization of the native Americans. Even though the poem can be divided into these three parts, which could be said to have each a unifying theme – America – there is still no conclusion to the poem; it does not resolve itself, neither does it bring about any solutions. Rather, it is a prolonged narrative of events and statements that share no chronological or logical order.

This lack of chronological and logical order can also be seen in the song “Baby,” written by Caetano Veloso. The song initiates with the striking of what sounds like two sticks, marking the tempo, and a bass guitar swaying in gentle pace. An acoustic guitar begins with up-beat tempo. Drums enter the song adorning the tempo with a characteristic bossa-nova beat. Strings are heard next with a *tranquillo*²¹⁶ mood to them, while playing a high pitched melody, giving the listener the sensation of serenity. We are left with the sensation that the song will be a smooth ode to joy. With an unpretentious tone of voice, Gal Costa begins the song by addressing the listener, “Você,” she says, the listener stops to pay attention, and she puzzles us with what comes next, “precisa saber da piscina.”²¹⁷

From there on Gal continues to address the listener, saying that it should do various things, all of which sound as vague as “know about the swimming pool.” The song refers to Chico Buarque’s “Carolina,”²¹⁸

²¹⁵ American labour leader, and socialist.

²¹⁶ Tranquil

²¹⁷ Which reads, “You need to know about about the swimming pool.”

²¹⁸ A solitary girl that longs for a lost love, and which Chico tries to console with tender words.

Roberto Carlos, and exalts São Paulo – indirectly – as the “best city of South America.” Indirectly, also, we may consider that the song talks about international companies drilling Brazilian soil in search of petroleum, when Gal advises the listener to “know about gasoline.” When Gal says that the listener should “learn English,” it can also be interpreted as two things: as a process of “Americanizing” Brazil which suggests that Brazilians ought to learn English, in order to survive the modern world, or the growing presence of American culture in Brazilian culture. The song also suggests that the listener should “have an ice cream in the snack bar.” On this sentence the lyric indirectly talks about the youth, by mentioning a food very unique to youngsters, the ice cream, and a very popular gathering place for young people, the snack bar. The song talks about many subjects, though indirectly, which do not relate with each other, and which do not follow a chronological, or logical, order. All the suggestions the singer gives to the listener could be made with another order of listing, and the song would still remain indecipherable. The song sounds like musical assemblage of what an average twenty-year-old Brazilian should know about.

Even though some poems which Ginsberg has written, and songs the tropicalistas have made, as the aforementioned, are ambiguous, who will deny that the 1950s and 1960s were ambiguous decades? This New World of the 1950s and 1960s was rapidly growing out of control, with global minds connected through TV sets, rock, and a psychedelic counterculture. Riots were exploding all over the globe, Cuba, Brazil, Korea, United States, France, England, as ‘isms’ appeared overnight and changed the lives of thousands in less than 24 hours. Protesters were emerging everywhere, John Lennon, Hélio Oiticica, Abbie Hoffman, Bob Dylan, Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela, the list goes on and on, and the amount of information contained in each of these names stretches to the unknown regions of our brains, the unconscious, and beyond. Each one of them was ready to put their body on the line for an ideal, an ideal which inevitably made millions hate them, even kill some of them. This New World offered virtually infinite possibilities to individuals, to persons who were willing to transform their bodies into lines of the long and endless Poem of Life, individuals ready to overcome geographical limitations and boundaries, and become world citizens.

6.4. Poetic Bodies in Action

The poet becomes a seer through a long, immense, and reasoned derangement of all senses. All shapes of love, suffering, madness. He searches himself, he exhausts all poisons in himself, to keep only the quintessences. (Arthur Rimbaud)²¹⁹

The 1950s and 1960s were decades of body exposure, and liberation, in all aspects. Freedom of speech (Ginsberg censored for obscenity), of the mind (conscious expansion), of the body (free sex with the pill, mini skirts, beat-hippie nudity, Western civilization had not seen so much skin ever since the first contact with American Indians), of the individual (Civil Rights, Feminism). All these fights for Freedom, these human callings, these global manifestations are acts of single individuals who gave their bodies and mind for a cause. A multitude of Jack's is just a multitude, but a crowd of individuals stands as solid as adamantium. In these two decades, humans managed to connect the world with live transmissions of wars, news, concerts, parades, manifestations, or anything a camera could focus its lens on.

This body presence can be seen very distinctively with Ginsberg, and the beats, who "claimed that the privatization of the body was political, and[...] transformed their own bodies into body politic."²²⁰ If we analyze strictly the poems of Allen Ginsberg, perhaps, one could say that the gentleman was not the best amongst fellow poets, but if we consider that a poem like "Howl" was read, sometimes, to crowds of several thousands, it is very different. It is different because here is a poet who realized the social significance which his acts had, and all the consequences implied by such thought, and decided to face and challenge critics, the Federal Government of the United States, a whole generation of fear and conformity, with only his poems as weapon of choice. To perceive such a monumental dispensation of energy, money, time, and life, for an ideal – peace – is what one might consider to be noble. Ginsberg made all that rattle, and difference, just by reading poetry, writing books, and being there, no guns, no violence, nothing but poems and a bare body.

²¹⁹ Arthur Rimbaud in Charters, Ann. ed. The Penguin Book of Beats. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992. p.xi

²²⁰ Farell, James J. The Spirit of The Sixties: Making Post War Radicalism. New York: Routledge Publishing, 1997. 64.

In a 1957 article for *The New Yorker* entitled “The Beat Generation,” Richard Eberhart, American East Coast poet, describes a public reading of poetry in San Francisco, of Ginsberg, and other poets:

Hundreds from about sixteen to thirty may show up and engage in an enthusiastic, freewheeling celebration of poetry, an analogue of which was jazz thirty years ago. The audience participates, shouting and stamping, interrupting and applauding. Poetry here has become a tangible social force, moving and unifying its auditors, releasing the energies of the audience through spoken, even shouted verse, in a way at present unique to this region.²²¹

The only thing Eberhart could never have foreseen was that that social force did most definitely not to remain unique to that region. The idea that individuals were able to interfere with the social, which Ginsberg and the beats disseminated like virtuous preachers, spread throughout the world. Ginsberg was committing himself to political struggles, talking about peace when presidents were talking about war, teaching individuals how to love when people were taught to hate. He did all that by exalting the importance of individual commitment. Instead of vilifying mass culture, he preferred to spread his word through it, while reiterating the power of the individual.

A very clear similarity can be seen with the tropicalistas, as Hilda Lontra points out in her essay “Tropicalismo: A Explosão e Seus Estilhaços,” when she says,

[o] tropicalismo apresentou uma proposta centrada no homem, elemento desencadeador das relações sociais.²²²

Instead of attaining themselves to nationalist ideals, and national identity, which carried implicit contradictions, the tropicalistas preferred to be open minded and receptive to world artists. Whereas the MPB

²²¹ Hyde, Lewis. ed. *On The Poetry of Allen Ginsberg*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1984. 24.

²²² In Cyntrão, Sylvia Helena. *A Forma da Festa – Tropicalismo: A Explosão e Seus Estilhaços*. Brasília: Editora Universidade de Brasília, 2000. 64.

artists of the time were ignoring the brilliant work of some international artists, by naïvely placing such works into categories, such as ‘rock’n’roll,’ the tropicalistas were incorporating these artists, and their work. The tropicalistas liked rock’n’roll, but they loved rockers like Jimi Hendrix, Bob Dylan, and John Lennon, because these artists, their lyrics, their guitar distortion, their live performances, their transgression, and their witty sarcasm meant a lot more to the tropicalistas than just rock’n’roll.

Very much like Ginsberg, the tropicalistas were supporters of mass communication, seeing much more benefits in it, than maleficence. When the Tropicália first erupted most of its artists were all young kids in their twenties. For them, to have the chance of amplifying their voice over the hills through means of electric gadgets, and reaching several thousands by means of TV sets was splendid, was exactly what they wanted. They knew that if they could extend their voices, and songs, over the country, and have people hearing them out, they would make it count. These new tools could fulfill their wildest dreams, it could make their individual actions reach society with just a click on the amplifier’s on button, or a click on TV’s remote control.

Ginsberg and the tropicalistas knew that, to make a difference and be remembered, their poems and songs had to escalate from the individual to the social. It is very easy to make a protest for peace inside your own room, or to play a rock tune with an unplugged guitar, inside your bathroom. Nevertheless, if you want to make your art significant it has to reach people, it has to make it between the individual and society; solitary acts stranded in time are nothing more than isolated and insignificant mimetic representations. Ginsberg and the tropicalistas knew that to reach the masses where they wanted, in their guts, in their minds, they needed to drop the social mask of normality which people were made to wear, and trail the path of madness, of anarchy. As they were firm believers that individual commitment was a ‘must’ for any revolution, their live performances – poetry readings, regarding Ginsberg, and concerts, regarding the tropicalistas – were radical to the core.

If we analyze the public readings of poetry promoted by Ginsberg and the beats, where people connected and freed themselves under the spell of Ginsberg’s voice, it is very similar to the exhilarating concerts of Os Mutantes, where the audience would forget the military dictatorship for a while, and sing along “*eu quis cantar minha canção iluminada de*

sol.”²²³ Both readings and concerts are extremely anarchic for their times; Ginsberg would sometimes wear brightly colored body size tunics, or become completely naked to read his poems, while Os Mutantes would wear costumes, and plastic outfits, and scream, howl, and roar. This anarchic image which Ginsberg and the tropicalistas managed to portray so well was definitely a factor which contributed to their mass appeal, as it made them stand out, it made a statement, it was political, and showed people that it was certainly something they had never seen before.

If only they could have foreseen it all, what could have happened? If only young Allen could have just a single glimpse of all the frenetic eyes which would read his “Howl,” or attend his readings. How different would a man like Gilberto Gil be, if only his dark brown eyes could have but blinked to the image of countless people singing all his songs, when he was rehearsing backstage with Os Mutantes for their presentation in the 1967 “III Festival de Música Popular Brasileira?” These distinct individuals, Ginsberg and the tropicalistas, with time, were able to prove to the world that their anarchic crazyness was only superficial, because deep down they were incredibly smart people, with a keen sense of humor, open minded, and ready for tomorrow; deep down all that crazyness made perfect sense.

6.5. Making Sense

*A Usina, de um lado. O artesanato no meio. E o primitivismo do outro.*²²⁴

(Gilberto Gil)

If we analyze in depth Ginsberg’s poems, and the Tropicália songs, they make a lot of sense, they talk about real things, situations, ideas, people, and with a highly elaborate thought. In “Howl” we can find protest against Eisenhower, Oppenheimer, prisons, factories, and oppressors, and praise for people like Jack Kerouac, Neal Cassady, St. John of The Cross, and Edgar Allan Poe. What this shows is that he discusses extremely popular themes of the 1950s, what was on the mind

²²³ Which reads, “ I wanted to sing my song illuminated with sun.” Author’s translation.

²²⁴ Coelho, Frederico, and Cohn, Sergio *Tropicália*. Rio de Janeiro: Beco do Azogue, 2008. 89. Gil talking about his presentation in the “III Festival da Música Popular Brasileira” with Os Mutantes on one side, and Dirceu “Chuchu” playing the berimbau on the other side.

of the cool youth of the United States, for instance, peace, socialism, atomic holocaust, Buddhism, drugs, sex, meditation, and Communism. This youth was by no means an alienated youth; on the contrary, most of them were healthy social agitators, quick-witted debaters, in a never ending quest for ecstasy; *vive Rimabud!* Ginsberg's poems are fragments of this generation, they are a loud calling for young people, they have the bare minimum, they are naked, raw, visceral, beat.

Some of the references Ginsberg makes are hidden and subtle as in, "Adonis of Denver," who is Neal Cassady. Instead of openly saying he thought Cassady was a deity, and declaring his everlasting love to him, Ginsberg leaves the message hidden and subtle, for historians and biographers to grasp, but for the average American to simply imagine a Greco-Phoenician myth strolling around the freezing streets of Denver. Some other references are said in allegories as in, "Moloch![...]Ashcans and unobtainable dollars," here "[a]shcans and unobtainable dollars" could be representing endless nights in an office, chain smoking killer cigarettes, and always waiting for an unexisting job whose pay is monumental. While other references are given through metaphors as in, "whose fate is a cloud of sexless hydrogen!" The "cloud of sexless hydrogen" could be interpreted as a haunting imaginative description of the future as it refers to the possibility of the sterility of humans as a consequence of several atomic bombs having exploded in the earth's atmosphere. Most of the things he talks about are not directly mentioned, and, thus, hard to grasp. Nevertheless, this does not mean that they are lacking content, or superficial, or alienated. This shows that "Howl" is a highly elaborate poem, with a strong and pertinent criticism towards society, and towards men whose souls are missing. Through his idiosyncratic imagery, and peculiar versification, Ginsberg managed to immortalize his generation. The superficial insanity reveals a dense poem, able to say much with few words, as each stanza carries only the naked truth of the subject it deals with. If we can take a good look at a country by hearing its "marginals," then Ginsberg gave the world a precise description of what it was like living in the 1950s United States as an outsider.

This same apparent indetermination and subtlety in addressing political issues of Ginsberg's poems can be seen in some tropicalistas songs, for example, "Geléia Geral," composed by Gilberto Gil and Torquato Neto. If we hear, or read the songs' lyrics as someone who knows nothing about Brazilian history, or cultural identity, we certainly

would not understand it. In the middle of the song, Gil says: “*As relíquias do Brasil: doce mulata malvada, um elepê de Sinatra.*”²²⁵ We all know that the mulata²²⁶ is indeed a national banner, or even an stereotypical icon of extreme nationalism sometimes, but we also know that Sinatra is not a relic of Brazil. So why do Gil and Torquato say so? They do it precisely to make us feel a sense of strangeness, to question what we take for national product, and international product, national identity, and international identity. Through an ironic appropriation of an American musical icon as a Brazilian relic, they were subtly questioning what was the national identity of Brazil. Was the military dictatorship, funded by the Americans, altering the identity of Brazil? Was there a powerful “Americanization” of the nation, and world going on, and if so, wouldn’t that also change what we consider national identity? Undoubtedly the answer to the three questions would be yes.

The song’s chorus is repeated four times, and part of it says: “*ê bumba-iê-iê é a mesma dança meu boi.*” The “bumba-iê-iê” refers to two distinct things: bumba-meu-boi, and the Beatles song “She Loves You.” Bumba-meu-boi is part of the Brazilian folklore, it is a mixture of theatre and dance. The characters of the play – humans, animals, and super-natural entities – interact with one another, and the story revolves around the death and resurrection of the bull (boi). “She Loves You” was one of the highest selling Beatles songs, and, maybe, epitomized the first phase of the fab-four. By juxtaposing these two distinct images, and then saying that they are the same dance, my dear bull, Gil and Torquato are making a precise allegory of what Brazil was going through in the 1960s, especially culturally: a struggle for a national identity, which was bound to be forged because there was no such thing as a unified national identity, not with a country under a harsh dictatorship. With this in mind, the title of the song becomes self-explanatory, the “Geléia” (jelly) is Brazil, its identity, its nationalism, its fictitious borders, and the “Geral” is signifying that this jelly, under constant transformation, has been generalized, it has spread all over Brazil.

In both cases, Ginsberg’s poems and Tropicália songs, most of their significance lies in between the lines, in what is not said, but suggested. In their reinterpretation of social values, lies another similarity between Ginsberg and the Tropicália. Ginsberg lived in a society which tried to annul the individual as much as possible, while exalting the collectiveness of people under the creed of democracy,

²²⁵ Which reads: “The relics of Brazil: sweet wicked mulata, a LP of Sinatra.”

²²⁶ A daughter of a white father and black mother, or vice-versa.

which would bring freedom and justice for all. Only a select few individuals were to be worshipped as Individuals, – with capital “I” – and they were the furthest thing possible from Allen Ginsberg. Americans were to praise individuals who fought for democracy, who supported the establishment, and who joined the incursions to spread the American way of life to the world.

In “Howl,” Ginsberg creates a myth around characters which he sees as extraordinary individuals, and demonizes people he considers sinister and plain evil. While doing this, he is celebrating Individuals, he is exalting Individuality, either by praising or by condemning people, but always shedding light upon individuals. In this sense of privileging the individual over the collective model, Ginsberg’s voice (or howl) is countercultural. For the average American Neal Cassady was a bum, an ex-con, hedonist slacker just like the rest of the gang, but for Ginsberg he was the “Adonis of Denver,” a deity of vegetation, associated with virility and beauty. By characterizing Neal as Adonis, Ginsberg is intrinsically saying he is unique, he is praiseworthy, Ginsberg is suggesting that here is an individual you do not see everyday, because he stands out, and becomes an Individual – with capital “I.” It is also interesting to point out that Ginsberg uses classical mythology, which is usually related to elitist art, to characterize a representative of popular culture. By doing so, Ginsberg is transgressively demystifying classical mythology, and also placing popular culture side by side with elite culture.

A very similar nullifying process of the individual was happening in Brazil during most the 1960s. The military dream was that Brazilians would wake up one fine day and decide to abide by Law, that all Brazilians would accept the naturally imposed order of the group, the wolf pack. Unfortunately for the military, that is not what happened in Brazil, although they were tremendously aided in their attempt by mass media. Through the TV, the military tried to neutralize all oppositions. This can be seen very clearly with rock’n’roll, because, through the media, the military managed to transform rock’n’roll into a product – as with Roberto Carlos. By making rock’n’roll ubiquitous to us, they instantly diminished it. At the same time that mass media had the ability of neutralizing just about any revolution, as long as the right people were hired. It also managed to numb the masses by giving them dumb entertainment. The news never talked about something that could harm, or affect the image of the military. The programs showed happy people, happy families, and a Brazil on its way to becoming a world power. This pasteurization of the population by means of the media, through the

pressure of censorship, was a very guile strategy adopted by the military.

The same attempt which Ginsberg made of reinterpreting social values, can be seen in some Tropicália songs, for example “Alegria, Alegria,” composed by Caetano Veloso. The song is divided into two parts, the first part talks about a person who walks around the streets, and is bombarded with all sorts of disconnected situations and information, as if he was being assaulted by mass media. He mentions everything from “presidents’ faces” to “Brigitte Bardot,” from “guerrillas” to “passionate kisses;” subjects which one might hear or see in respectable newspapers, like “presidents’ faces,” and “guerrillas,” mingled with subjects one might hear or see in tabloid newspapers, as “Brigitte Bardot,” and “passionate kisses.” By placing these diverse images side by side, and making no apparent difference between them, Veloso is reinterpreting social values. The second part of the song sounds more like a daydreaming of the singer; it begins with, “*ela pensa em casamento e eu nunca mais fui à escola.*”²²⁷ Veloso’s second response to the wedding (proposal?) is even more baffling, as he says, “*eu tomo uma coca-cola.*”²²⁸ His answer to one of the central social pacts of the Catholic Brazilian nation was to drink an American beverage, and icon, creating, thus, a huge discussion over social values. It is possible to interpret this aimless promenade, while being bombarded by unrelated images, as a social condition which many Brazilians were living, massification, pasteurization, annulment. But it is in the chorus that Veloso gives his subtle message, as if justifying the song’s title, amid so much violence. In the first chorus he says, “*O peito cheio de amores vãos/ Eu vou/ Por que não? Por que não?*”²²⁹ and, on the second, he ends the song with “*Eu quero seguir vivendo amor/ Eu vou / Por que não? Por que não?*”²³⁰ This could be interpreted as Caetano saying that even though we have been nullified, we have been tormented, we have been beaten up, we can still carry on living and loving, why not?

While Ginsberg criticizes American society for having tried to establish the collective over the individual, Caetano criticizes the nullifying process which mass media was trying to force upon Brazilians. While Ginsberg praises the individual, by turning humans

²²⁷ Which reads, “She thinks about wedding, and I have never went to school again.” Author’s translation.

²²⁸ Which reads, “I drink a coke.” Author’s translation.

²²⁹ Which reads, “The chest full of vain loves/ I Go / Why not? Why not?” Author’s translation.

²³⁰ Which reads, “I want to carry on living, love / I will / Why not? Why not?” Author’s translation.

into myths, Caetano repeatedly cites mass media icons and images to discuss what mass media was doing to Brazil. In a society that praised the collective, the countercultural act was to praise the individual, and in a society which glorified mass media, the countercultural act was to demystify it. On a 1954 poem entitled “Song,” Ginsberg wrote, “The weight of the world is love,”²³¹ (1-2) Thirteen years later, Caetano seemed to echo this blissful affirmative when he ended his song, “Alegria Alegria” with the question: “why not?”

²³¹ Ginsberg, Allen. Howl and other poems. 40th ed. Ed. Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Nancy J. Peters. San Francisco: City Lights Bookstore, 1992. 51.

CHAPTER VII

Conclusion

[t]wo juxtaposed utterances belonging to different people who know nothing about one another, if they only slightly converge on one and the same subject (idea), inevitably enter into dialogical relations with one another²³²

It takes not much more than a poem or song to reach out to people, move them, revolutionize their thoughts, mind, and life. Poems and songs can sometimes make us stop to consider that perhaps there really is a very reasonable, logical, and cosmic order to it all. One act right here and now becomes this gigantic chain of events, eternally unwinding, producing a constant stream of today's, and here we are, standing on the right nows. Who could ever guess that a poetry reading in a small San Francisco gallery would provoke such a spark of energy? A town, city, country, and an ocean-crossing spark, much before the optical fiber that reached the minds of the tropicalistas many years later. The hollering of Ginsberg and of the tropicalistas has a strong resemblance; it is the youth rebelling against the old age, the marginal against the elite, today facing yesterday. Ginsberg and the tropicalistas were not normal, neither were they willing to try to be; as Caetano said in his song, "Vaca Profana," "*de perto ninguém é normal.*"²³³

Ginsberg, and the tropicalistas were well aware of the power of their poems, songs, and presentations. Ginsberg was a connoisseur of poetry,²³⁴ and knew exactly what the minds of his generation were longing to hear, while the tropicalistas were brilliant musicians, who were able to revolutionize the musical and cultural industry of Brazil. Ginsberg and the tropicalistas were definitely not "first-time travelers" in the business, or lucky creatures who made it "big time" all of a sudden; they were, on the contrary, experienced artists who waited patiently for their turn to come around; and when it came, they had a pretty clear notion of what had to be done, and how to do it. It would be

²³² Bakhtin, Mikhail M. Speech Genres & Other Late Essays. Trans. Vern W. McGee. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986. 114-115.

²³³ Which reads "up close nobody is normal."

²³⁴ He even taught poetry at Naropa University, the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics during the 1970's.

wrong to consider such artists – Ginsberg and the tropicalistas – naïve, amateurs, or incompetent; quite the opposite, they perfected their craft to the point of being able to improvise freely, and seek different horizons. These young men and women were reading Proust, Sartre, and Gonçalves Dias, listening to John Coltrane, Walter Smetak, and John Cage, writing about changing the world, while living through years of terror.

In the same way Farrell considers the beats to be the precursors of the American counterculture, so does Dunn regarding the tropicalistas as precursors of the Brazilian counterculture. Ginsberg and the tropicalistas broke away from traditional standards of art, and dealt with the consequences. While Ginsberg managed to bring back into poetry and society the continental force of the Individual – with capital “I,” – the tropicalistas managed to revolutionize the musical and cultural industry of Brazil by fighting for freedom of speech, and all the freedoms attached to the individual. Ginsberg’s struggle and the tropicalistas’ struggle went far beyond the limits of their art. Ginsberg and the tropicalistas gradually became more and more *personae non gratae* in their native countries, which obviously gives us a good hint about what the people who were controlling such countries thought about Ginsberg’s art and the tropicalistas’ art, and also shows how powerful their works were, for country leaders to be concerned about them. If anyone back then thought that art was all about pleasing audiences, soothing the ear, delighting the eyes, and relaxing minds, how big was his/her mistake. The whole idea, at least for me, behind Ginsberg and the tropicalistas, is that their art was all but traditional and standard, it was revolutionary. In the introduction to “*Howl*,” William Carlos Williams describes the poem as “an arresting poem. Literally he [Ginsberg] has, from all the evidence, been through hell.”²³⁵ On the closing line of his introduction he warns us, “[h]old back the edges of your gowns, Ladies, we are going through hell.” A similar warning can be seen in the aforementioned article written by Hélio Oiticica, “A Trama da Terra que Treme (O Sentido de vanguarda no Grupo Baiano),” when he reminds us that:

²³⁵ Williams, William Carlos. Introduction. *Howl and other poems*. 40th ed. By Allen Ginsberg. San Francisco: City Lights Bookstore, 1992. 8.

Caetano e Gil, os Mutantes, Duprat, Tom Zé, modificam estruturas, criam novas estruturas, sua experiência é calcada numa modificação a longo prazo, não se reduz a apresentações de chegar, cantar, e pronto, voltar pra casa e dormir sossegado depois de tomar uns whiskys.

When we think about Ginsberg, it is always relevant to remember that for him “[l]iberdade de expressão foi indissociável do teste dos limites da liberdade individual e das tentativas de projetá-la como utopia política.”²³⁶ Ginsberg could not simply write his poems and pretend nothing evil and sinister was going on around him, his determination to make his thoughts reach people, and active involvement with socio-political issues were intrinsic in his work, and made all the difference. While everyone talked about imminent war, Ginsberg talked about instant peace, while many artists were willing to simply not talk about the Vietnam war, or the Cold war, Ginsberg chose to take his stand, and cry for peace. Not only did he decide to write about what he could not agree with, he also put his body on the line while participating in public manifestations, protests, gatherings, happenings, and rallies. The context of Ginsberg’s life and work only enriches the discussion of his poetry.

One of Ginsberg’s finest messages to the United States and the world was when he said, in 1956, “America I’m putting my queer shoulder to the wheel.” By saying that he is affirming his condemned sexual preference with an attitude that suggests that he does not really care if anyone will hate him, hit him, or whatever, because he does not fear public exposure. He is confronting the militarized and reactionary American society of the 1950s by assuming his homosexuality, his individuality, and his freedom of expression. When Ginsberg ends the poem “America” with the line, “America I’m putting my queer shoulder to the wheel,” he leaves no doubts to the crazy cowboys and war freaks that he was not going to give up or shut up. “[I]n a personalist fashion, he concludes by pledging his allegiance,”²³⁷ yet his pledge of allegiance was to another ideal, that of confrontation, and of assuming one’s self. Ginsberg is getting right down to the job, something viewed by many

²³⁶ Willer, Claudio. *Geração Beat*. Porto Alegre: L&PM. 2009. 26. Which reads “freedom of expression was indissociable to the testing of the limits of individual freedom, and the attempts of projecting [such freedom] as political utopia.” Author’s translation.

²³⁷ Farrell, James J. *The Spirit of The Sixties: Making Post War Radicalism*. New York: Routledge Publishing. 1997. 61.

Americans of the 1950s as a noble and dignifying act, in the most transgressive of all manners. A very similar confrontation can be seen in a letter written by Gilberto Gil in 1970.

In 1970, the exiled Gilberto Gil received a prize – a Golden Dolphin – from the Museu da Imagem e do Som²³⁸ (MIS), for his farewell samba to Brazil, “Aquele Abraço,” which he had written and recorded just a few months before being forced to leave the country. Gil rejected the prize through a letter published in the journal *O Pasquim*. In this letter Gil attacked the entire industry that was rewarding him with an “insignificant” dolphin, he also condemned what that industry represented to him, an “asphyxiating cultural paternalization, moralist, stupid, and reactionary.”²³⁹ Very much like the confronting farewell tone of Ginsberg’s “America I’m putting my queer shoulder to the wheel,” Gil also says, “Para mim, a essa altura, aceitar ou não prêmios ao trabalho que fiz no Brasil já não tem a menor importância. Agora eu estou on the road.”²⁴⁰ Gil was many miles away from home, doing, and searching other sounds, while having to work hard in swinging London, at that point he did not care if the MIS was praising “Aquele Abraço,” he did not need anything from the MIS, and certainly was not going to accept an award from an institution which, in the recent past, had vehemently stigmatized his work. Like Ginsberg, Gil was confronting the conservative musical and cultural industries of Brazil, he would continue doing his songs, his own style, no matter if others liked it or not.

It is my belief that this research is significant for all those who wish to know a little bit more about beat literature, especially the life and work of poet Allen Ginsberg, as well as the creation and significance of the musical and cultural movement Tropicália. There is not much research about Allen Ginsberg, or the beats, being conducted, on the academic level, in Brazil, as far as I was able to research. My (re)interpretation of the Tropicália, in comparison with Allen Ginsberg’s work, is pioneering, and promotes another type of debate over a much commented topic. The proposition of this study was to reconsider what had been written about Ginsberg and the tropicalistas, while trying to find similarities between them. Even though the relation between

²³⁸ Museum of Image and Sound.

²³⁹ Coelho, Frederico, and Cohn, Sergio *Tropicália*. Rio de Janeiro: Beco do Azogue, 2008. 253. The original reads, “sempre esteve contra a paternalização cultural asfixiante, moralista, estúpida e reacionária.”

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 231. Which reads, “for me, at this stage, to accept or not prizes to the work that I did in Brazil already have no importance whatsoever. Now I am on the road.”

Ginsberg and the Tropicália seemed to be almost impossible,²⁴¹ I was able to find curious resonances of Ginsberg on the Tropicália.

I believe that a possible next step in this research could look at what happened in the United States, and Brazil after Ginsberg and the tropicalistas emerged, and try to find connections and correspondences there, which is something I chose to write less about. The reason for that choice was that I reckoned that there was much more correspondence between Ginsberg and the tropicalistas in the few years prior to each artist's notoriety, as well as the initial bursts of each revolution – Beat and Tropicália. As it happens, but only now do I see, there is an enormous correspondence between what happened in the United States, and Brazil after the emergence of Ginsberg and the tropicalistas. They were able to directly alter the cultural, social, political and economic structure of the societies they lived in. On this other correspondence of Ginsberg and the tropicalistas – what happened in the United States and Brazil after them – lies ample amount of material to be analyzed.

The strength of Ginsberg and the tropicalistas is something that amazes me still today, their tenacity, their struggle, their confidence that they would win, whatever the odds, is impressive. To say what they said, and do what they did is not an easy task, it takes guts, ability, wit, and perseverance. They put their lives on the line and bodies on stage, and said what others wanted to say, but did not, due to fear. When I think about Ginsberg, and the tropicalistas, and the vast amount of things they managed to accomplish I remember one of Walt Whitman's poems,²⁴² where he writes, "I am a man who, sauntering along without fully stopping, turns a casual look upon you and then averts his face, [l]eaving it to you to prove and define it, [e]xpecting the main things from you." (8-12) I think Whitman would be very proud of them.

²⁴¹ Nelson Motta even told me when I tried to seek counsel with him in a night of autographs he was giving, "I do not think there is such a correspondence, Ginsberg is all about jazz, and the Tropicália about rock."

²⁴² Whitman, Walt. "Poets to Come." The Pocket Book of Modern Verse English & American Poetry of The Last 100 Years From Walt Whitman to Dylan Thomas. Ed. Williams, Oscar. New York: Pocket Books Inc, 1954. 51.

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APPENDIX

“Howl”

For Carl Solomon

I

I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by
 madness, starving hysterical naked,
 dragging themselves through the negro streets at dawn
 looking for an angry fix,
 angelheaded hipsters burning for the ancient heavenly
 connection to the starry dynamo in the machin-
 ery of night,
 who poverty and tatters and hollow-eyed and high sat
 up smoking in the supernatural darkness of
 cold-water flats floating across the tops of cities
 contemplating jazz,
 who bared their brains to Heaven under the El and
 saw Mohammedan angels staggering on tene-
 ment roofs illuminated,
 who passed through universities with radiant cool eyes
 hallucinating Arkansas and Blake-light tragedy
 among the scholars of war,
 who were expelled from the academies for crazy &
 publishing obscene odes on the windows of the
 skull,
 who covered in unshaven rooms in underwear, burn-
 ing their money in wastebaskets and listening
 to the Terror through the wall,
 who got busted in their pubic beards returning through
 Laredo with a belt of marijuana for New York,
 who ate fire in paint hotels or drank turpentine in
 Paradise Alley, death, or purgatoried their
 torsos night after night
 with dreams, with drugs, with waking nightmares, al-
 cohol and cock and endless balls,
 incomparable blind; streets of shuddering cloud and

lightning in the mind leaping toward poles of
 Canada & Paterson, illuminating all the mo-
 tionless world of Time between,
 Peyote solidities of halls, backyard green tree cemetery
 dawns, wine drunkenness over the rooftops,
 storefront boroughs of teahead joyride neon
 blinking traffic light, sun and moon and tree
 vibrations in the roaring winter dusks of Brook-
 lyn, ashcan rantings and kind king light of mind,
 who chained themselves to subways for the endless
 ride from Battery to holy Bronx on benzedrine
 until the noise of wheels and children brought
 them down shuddering mouth-wracked and
 battered bleak of brain all drained of brilliance
 in the drear light of Zoo,
 who sank all night in submarine light of Bickford's
 floated out and sat through the stale beer after
 noon in desolate Fugazzi's, listening to the crack
 of doom on the hydrogen jukebox,
 who talked continuously seventy hours from park to
 pad to bar to Bellevue to museum to the Brook-
 lyn Bridge,
 lost battalion of platonic conversationalists jumping
 down the stoops off fire escapes off windowsills
 off Empire State out of the moon,
 yacketayakking screaming vomiting whispering facts
 and memories and anecdotes and eyeball kicks
 and shocks of hospitals and jails and wars,
 whole intellects disgorged in total recall for seven days
 and nights with brilliant eyes, meat for the
 Synagogue cast on the pavement,
 who vanished into nowhere Zen New Jersey leaving a
 trail of ambiguous picture postcards of Atlantic
 City Hall,
 suffering Eastern sweats and Tangerian bone-grind-
 ings and migraines of China under junk-with-
 drawal in Newark's bleak furnished room,
 who wandered around and around at midnight in the
 railroad yard wondering where to go, and went,
 leaving no broken hearts,

- who lit cigarettes in boxcars boxcars boxcars racketing through snow toward lonesome farms in grandfather night,
- who studied Plotinus Poe St. John of the Cross telepathy and bop kabbalah because the cosmos instinctively vibrated at their feet in Kansas,
- who loned it through the streets of Idaho seeking visionary indian angels who were visionary indian angels,
- who thought they were only mad when Baltimore gleamed in supernatural ecstasy,
- who jumped in limousines with the Chinaman of Oklahoma on the impulse of winter midnight street light smalltown rain,
- who lounged hungry and lonesome through Houston seeking jazz or sex or soup, and followed the brilliant Spaniard to converse about America and Eternity, a hopeless task, and so took ship to Africa,
- who disappeared into the volcanoes of Mexico leaving behind nothing but the shadow of dungarees and the lava and ash of poetry scattered in fire place Chicago,
- who reappeared on the West Coast investigating the F.B.I. in beards and shorts with big pacifist eyes sexy in their dark skin passing out incomprehensible leaflets,
- who burned cigarette holes in their arms protesting the narcotic tobacco haze of Capitalism,
- who distributed Supercommunist pamphlets in Union Square weeping and undressing while the sirens of Los Alamos wailed them down, and wailed down Wall, and the Staten Island ferry also wailed,
- who broke down crying in white gymnasiums naked and trembling before the machinery of other skeletons,
- who bit detectives in the neck and shrieked with delight in policecars for committing no crime but their own wild cooking pederasty and intoxication,

- who howled on their knees in the subway and were dragged off the roof waving genitals and manuscripts,
- who let themselves be fucked in the ass by saintly motorcyclists, and screamed with joy,
- who blew and were blown by those human seraphim, the sailors, caresses of Atlantic and Caribbean love,
- who balled in the morning in the evenings in rose gardens and the grass of public parks and cemeteries scattering their semen freely to whomever come who may,
- who hiccuped endlessly trying to giggle but wound up with a sob behind a partition in a Turkish Bath when the blond & naked angel came to pierce them with a sword,
- who lost their loveboys to the three old shrews of fate the one eyed shrew of the heterosexual dollar the one eyed shrew that winks out of the womb and the one eyed shrew that does nothing but sit on her ass and snip the intellectual golden threads of the craftsman's loom,
- who copulated ecstatic and insatiate with a bottle of beer a sweetheart a package of cigarettes a candle and fell off the bed, and continued along the floor and down the hall and ended fainting on the wall with a vision of ultimate cunt and come eluding the last gyzym of consciousness,
- who sweetened the snatches of a million girls trembling in the sunset, and were red eyed in the morning but prepared to sweeten the snatch of the sun rise, flashing buttocks under barns and naked in the lake,
- who went out whoring through Colorado in myriad stolen night-cars, N.C., secret hero of these poems, cocksman and Adonis of Denver-joy to the memory of his innumerable lays of girls in empty lots & diner backyards, moviehouses' rickety rows, on mountaintops in caves or with gaunt waitresses in familiar roadside lonely petticoat upliftings & especially secret gas-station

- solipsisms of johns, & hometown alleys too,
who faded out in vast sordid movies, were shifted in
dreams, woke on a sudden Manhattan, and
picked themselves up out of basements hung
over with heartless Tokay and horrors of Third
Avenue iron dreams & stumbled to unemploy-
ment offices,
who walked all night with their shoes full of blood on
the snowbank docks waiting for a door in the
East River to open to a room full of steamheat
and opium,
who created great suicidal dramas on the apartment
cliff-banks of the Hudson under the wartime
blue floodlight of the moon & their heads shall
be crowned with laurel in oblivion,
who ate the lamb stew of the imagination or digested
the crab at the muddy bottom of the rivers of
Bowery,
who wept at the romance of the streets with their
pushcarts full of onions and bad music,
who sat in boxes breathing in the darkness under the
bridge, and rose up to build harpsichords in
their lofts,
who coughed on the sixth floor of Harlem crowned
with flame under the tubercular sky surrounded
by orange crates of theology,
who scribbled all night rocking and rolling over lofty
incantations which in the yellow morning were
stanzas of gibberish,
who cooked rotten animals lung heart feet tail borsht
& tortillas dreaming of the pure vegetable
kingdom,
who plunged themselves under meat trucks looking for
an egg,
who threw their watches off the roof to cast their ballot
for Eternity outside of Time, & alarm clocks
fell on their heads every day for the next decade,
who cut their wrists three times successively unsuccess-
fully, gave up and were forced to open antique
stores where they thought they were growing
old and cried,

who were burned alive in their innocent flannel suits
 on Madison Avenue amid blasts of leaden verse
 & the tanked-up clatter of the iron regiments
 of fashion & the nitroglycerine shrieks of the
 fairies of advertising & the mustard gas of sinister
 intelligent editors, or were run down by the
 drunken taxicabs of Absolute Reality,
 who jumped off the Brooklyn Bridge this actually hap-
 pened and walked away unknown and forgotten
 into the ghostly daze of Chinatown soup alley
 ways & firetrucks, not even one free beer,
 who sang out of their windows in despair, fell out of
 the subway window, jumped in the filthy Pas-
 saic, leaped on negroes, cried all over the street,
 danced on broken wineglasses barefoot smashed
 phonograph records of nostalgic European
 1930s German jazz finished the whiskey and
 threw up groaning into the bloody toilet, moans
 in their ears and the blast of colossal steam
 whistles,
 who barreled down the highways of the past journeying
 to each other's hotrod-Golgotha jail-solitude
 watch or Birmingham jazz incarnation,
 who drove crosscountry seventytwo hours to find out
 if I had a vision or you had a vision or he had
 a vision to find out Eternity,
 who journeyed to Denver, who died in Denver, who
 came back to Denver & waited in vain, who
 watched over Denver & brooded & loned in
 Denver and finally went away to find out the
 Time, & now Denver is lonesome for her heroes,
 who fell on their knees in hopeless cathedrals praying
 for each other's salvation and light and breasts,
 until the soul illuminated its hair for a second,
 who crashed through their minds in jail waiting for
 impossible criminals with golden heads and the
 charm of reality in their hearts who sang sweet
 blues to Alcatraz,
 who retired to Mexico to cultivate a habit, or Rocky
 Mount to tender Buddha or Tangiers to boys
 or Southern Pacific to the black locomotive or

Harvard to Narcissus to Woodlawn to the
 daisychain or grave,
 who demanded sanity trials accusing the radio of hyp
 notism & were left with their insanity & their
 hands & a hung jury,
 who threw potato salad at CCNY lecturers on Dadaism
 and subsequently presented themselves on the
 granite steps of the madhouse with shaven heads
 and harlequin speech of suicide, demanding in-
 stantaneous lobotomy,
 and who were given instead the concrete void of insulin
 Metrazol electricity hydrotherapy psycho-
 therapy occupational therapy pingpong &
 amnesia,
 who in humorless protest overturned only one symbolic
 pingpong table, resting briefly in catatonia,
 returning years later truly bald except for a wig of
 blood, and tears and fingers, to the visible mad
 man doom of the wards of the madtowns of the
 East,
 Pilgrim State's Rockland's and Greystone's foetid
 halls, bickering with the echoes of the soul, rock-
 ing and rolling in the midnight solitude-bench
 dolmen-realms of love, dream of life a night-
 mare, bodies turned to stone as heavy as the
 moon,
 with mother finally *****, and the last fantastic book
 flung out of the tenement window, and the last
 door closed at 4. A.M. and the last telephone
 slammed at the wall in reply and the last fur-
 nished room emptied down to the last piece of
 mental furniture, a yellow paper rose twisted
 on a wire hanger in the closet, and even that
 imaginary, nothing but a hopeful little bit of
 hallucination
 ah, Carl, while you are not safe I am not safe, and
 now you're really in the total animal soup of
 time

and who therefore ran through the icy streets obsessed
 with a sudden flash of the alchemy of the use
 of the ellipse the catalog the meter & the vibrat-
 ing plane,
 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 intel-
 ligent and shaking with shame, rejected yet con-
 fessing out the soul to conform to the rhythm
 of thought in his naked and endless head,
 the madman bum and 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 sabacthani saxophone
 cry that shivered the cities down to the last radio
 with the absolute heart of the poem of life butchered
 out of their own bodies good to eat a thousand
 years.

II

What sphinx of cement and aluminum bashed open
 their skulls and ate up their brains and imagi-
 nation?
 Moloch! Solitude! Filth! Ugliness! Ashcans and unob-
 tainable dollars! Children screaming under the
 stairways! Boys sobbing in armies! Old men
 weeping in the parks!
 Moloch! Moloch! Nightmare of Moloch! Moloch the
 loveless! Mental Moloch! Moloch the heavy
 judger of men!

Moloch the incomprehensible prison! Moloch the
 crossbone soulless jailhouse and Congress of
 sorrows! Moloch whose buildings are judgment!
 Moloch the vast stone of war! Moloch the stun-
 ned governments!

Moloch whose mind is pure machinery! Moloch whose
 blood is running money! Moloch whose fingers
 are ten armies! Moloch whose breast is a cannibal
 dynamo! Moloch whose ear is a smoking
 tomb!

Moloch whose eyes are a thousand blind windows!
 Moloch whose skyscrapers stand in the long
 streets like endless Jehovahs! Moloch whose fac-
 tories dream and croak in the fog! Moloch whose
 smokestacks and antennae crown the cities!

Moloch whose love is endless oil and stone! Moloch
 whose soul is electricity and banks! Moloch
 whose poverty is the specter of genius! Moloch
 whose fate is a cloud of sexless hydrogen!
 Moloch whose name is the Mind!

Moloch in whom I sit lonely! Moloch in whom I dream
 Angels! Crazy in Moloch! Cocksucker in
 Moloch! Lacklove and manless in Moloch!

Moloch who entered my soul early! Moloch in whom
 I am a consciousness without a body! Moloch
 who frightened me out of my natural ecstasy!
 Moloch whom I abandon! Wake up in Moloch!
 Light streaming out of the sky!

Moloch! Moloch! Robot apartments! invisible suburbs!
 skeleton treasuries! blind capitals! demonic
 industries! spectral nations! invincible mad
 houses! granite cocks! monstrous bombs!

They broke their backs lifting Moloch to Heaven! Pave-
 ments, trees, radios, tons! lifting the city to
 Heaven which exists and is everywhere about
 us!

Visions! omens! hallucinations! miracles! ecstasies!
 gone down the American river!

Dreams! adorations! illuminations! religions! the whole
 boatload of sensitive bullshit!

Breakthroughs! over the river! flips and crucifixions!
 gone down the flood! Highs! Epiphanies! De-
 spairs! Ten years' animal screams and suicides!
 Minds! New loves! Mad generation! down on
 the rocks of Time!

Real holy laughter in the river! They saw it all! the
 wild eyes! the holy yells! They bade farewell!
 They jumped off the roof! to solitude! waving!
 carrying flowers! Down to the river! into the
 street!

III

Carl Solomon! I'm with you in Rockland
 where you're madder than I am
 I'm with you in Rockland
 where you must feel very strange
 I'm with you in Rockland
 where you imitate the shade of my mother
 I'm with you in Rockland
 where you've murdered your twelve secretaries
 I'm with you in Rockland
 where you laugh at this invisible humor
 I'm with you in Rockland
 where we are great writers on the same dreadful
 typewriter
 I'm with you in Rockland
 where your condition has become serious and
 is reported on the radio
 I'm with you in Rockland
 where the faculties of the skull no longer admit
 the worms of the senses
 I'm with you in Rockland
 where you drink the tea of the breasts of the
 spinsters of Utica
 I'm with you in Rockland
 where you pun on the bodies of your nurses the
 harpies of the Bronx

- I'm with you in Rockland
 where you scream in a straightjacket that you're
 losing the game of the actual pingpong of the
 abyss
- I'm with you in Rockland
 where you bang on the catatonic piano the soul
 is innocent and immortal it should never die
 ungodly in an armed madhouse
- I'm with you in Rockland
 where fifty more shocks will never return your
 soul to its body again from its pilgrimage to a
 cross in the void
- I'm with you in Rockland
 where you accuse your doctors of insanity and
 plot the Hebrew socialist revolution against the
 fascist national Golgotha
- I'm with you in Rockland
 where you will split the heavens of Long Island
 and resurrect your living human Jesus from the
 superhuman tomb
- I'm with you in Rockland
 where there are twenty-five-thousand mad com-
 rades all together singing the final stanzas of the
 Internationale
- I'm with you in Rockland
 where we hug and kiss the United States under
 our bedsheets the United States that coughs all
 night and won't let us sleep
- I'm with you in Rockland
 where we wake up electrified out of the coma
 by our own souls' airplanes roaring over the
 roof they've come to drop angelic bombs the
 hospital illuminates itself imaginary walls col-
 lapse O skinny legions run outside O starry
 spangled shock of mercy the eternal war is
 here O victory forget your underwear we're
 free
- I'm with you in Rockland
 in my dreams you walk dripping from a sea-
 journey on the highway across America in tears
 to the door of my cottage in the Western night.

“America”

America I've given you all and now I'm nothing.
 America two dollars and twenty-seven cents January 17, 1956.
 I can't stand my own mind.
 America when will we end the human war?
 Go fuck yourself with your atom bomb
 I don't feel good don't bother me.
 I won't write my poem till I'm in my right mind.
 America when will you be angelic?
 When will you take off your clothes?
 When will you look at yourself through the grave?
 When will you be worthy of your million Trotskyites?
 America why are your libraries full of tears?
 America when will you send your eggs to India?
 I'm sick of your insane demands.
 When can I go into the supermarket and buy what I need with my good
 looks?
 America after all it is you and I who are perfect not the next world.
 Your machinery is too much for me.
 You made me want to be a saint.
 There must be some other way to settle this argument.
 Burroughs is in Tangiers I don't think he'll come back it's sinister.
 Are you being sinister or is this some form of practical joke?
 I'm trying to come to the point.
 I refuse to give up my obsession.
 America stop pushing I know what I'm doing.
 America the plum blossoms are falling.
 I haven't read the newspapers for months, everyday somebody goes on
 trial for murder.
 America I feel sentimental about the Wobllies.
 America I used to be a communist when I was a kid and I'm not sorry.
 I smoke marijuana every chance I get.
 I sit in my house for days on end and stare at the roses in the closet.
 When I go to Chinatown I get drunk and never get laid.
 My mind is made up there's going to be trouble.
 You should have seen me reading Marx.
 My psychoanalyst thinks I'm perfectly right.
 I won't say the Lord's Prayer.
 I have mystical visions and cosmic vibrations.

America I still haven't told you what you did to Uncle Max after he came over from Russia.

I'm addressing you.

Are you going to let our emotional life be run by Time Magazine?

I'm obsessed by Time Magazine.

I read it every week.

Its cover stares at me every time I slink past the corner candystore.

I read it in the basement of the Berkeley Public Library.

It's always telling me about responsibility. Businessmen are serious.

Movie producers are serious. Everybody's serious but me.

It occurs to me that I am America.

I am talking to myself again.

Asia is rising against me.

I haven't got a chinaman's chance.

I'd better consider my national resources.

My national resources consist of two joints of marijuana millions of genitals an unpublishable private literature that goes 1400 miles and hour and twentyfivethousand mental institutions.

I say nothing about my prisons nor the millions of underprivileged who live in my flowerpots under the light of five hundred suns.

I have abolished the whorehouses of France, Tangiers is the next to go.

My ambition is to be President despite the fact that I'm a Catholic.

America how can I write a holy litany in your silly mood?

I will continue like Henry Ford my strophes are as individual as his automobiles more so they're all different sexes

America I will sell you strophes \$2500 apiece \$500 down on your old strophe

America free Tom Mooney

America save the Spanish Loyalists

America Sacco & Vanzetti must not die

America I am the Scottsboro boys.

America when I was seven momma took me to Communist Cell meetings they sold us garbanzos a handful per ticket a ticket costs a nickel and the speeches were free everybody was angelic and sentimental about the workers it was all so sincere you have no idea what a good thing the party

was in 1835 Scott Nearing was a grand old man a real mensch Mother

Bloor made me cry I once saw Israel Amter plain. Everybody must have been a spy.

America you don't really want to go to war.

America it's them bad Russians.

Them Russians them Russians and them Chinamen. And them Russians.

The Russia wants to eat us alive. The Russia's power mad. She wants to take our cars from out our garages.

Her wants to grab Chicago. Her needs a Red Reader's Digest. her wants our auto plants in Siberia. Him big bureaucracy running our fillingstations.

That no good. Ugh. Him makes Indians learn read. Him need big black niggers.

Hah. Her make us all work sixteen hours a day. Help.

America this is quite serious.

America this is the impression I get from looking in the television set.

America is this correct?

I'd better get right down to the job.

It's true I don't want to join the Army or turn lathes in precision parts factories, I'm nearsighted and psychopathic anyway.

America I'm putting my queer shoulder to the wheel.

“A Supermarket in California”

What thoughts I have of you tonight, Walt Whitman, for
I walked down the sidestreets under the trees with a headache
self-conscious looking at the full moon.

In my hungry fatigue, and shopping for images, I went
into the neon fruit supermarket, dreaming of your enumerations!

What peaches and what penumbras! Whole families
shopping at night! Aisles full of husbands! Wives in the
avocados, babies in the tomatoes!--and you, Garcia Lorca, what
were you doing down by the watermelons?

I saw you, Walt Whitman, childless, lonely old grubber,
poking among the meats in the refrigerator and eyeing the grocery
boys.

I heard you asking questions of each: Who killed the
pork chops? What price bananas? Are you my Angel?

I wandered in and out of the brilliant stacks of cans
following you, and followed in my imagination by the store
detective.

We strode down the open corridors together in our
solitary fancy tasting artichokes, possessing every frozen
delicacy, and never passing the cashier.

Where are we going, Walt Whitman? The doors close in
an hour. Which way does your beard point tonight?

(I touch your book and dream of our odyssey in the
supermarket and feel absurd.)

Will we walk all night through solitary streets? The
trees add shade to shade, lights out in the houses, we'll both be
lonely.

Will we stroll dreaming of the lost America of love
past blue automobiles in driveways, home to our silent cottage?

Ah, dear father, graybeard, lonely old courage-teacher,
what America did you have when Charon quit poling his ferry and
you got out on a smoking bank and stood watching the boat
disappear on the black waters of Lethe?

"Sunflower Sutra"

I walked on the banks of the tincan banana dock and
 sat down under the huge shade of a Southern
 Pacific locomotive to look at the sunset over the
 box house hills and cry.

Jack Kerouac sat beside me on a busted rusty iron
 pole, companion, we thought the same thoughts
 of the soul, bleak and blue and sad-eyed,
 surrounded by the gnarled steel roots of trees of
 machinery.

The oily water on the river mirrored the red sky, sun
 sank on top of final Frisco peaks, no fish in that
 stream, no hermit in those mounts, just ourselves
 rheumy-eyed and hungover like old bums
 on the riverbank, tired and wily.

Look at the Sunflower, he said, there was a dead gray
 shadow against the sky, big as a man, sitting
 dry on top of a pile of ancient sawdust--

I rushed up enchanted--it was my first sunflower,
 memories of Blake--my visions--Harlem
 and Hells of the Eastern rivers, bridges clanking Joes
 Greasy Sandwiches, dead baby carriages, black
 treadless tires forgotten and unretreaded, the
 poem of the riverbank, condoms & pots, steel
 knives, nothing stainless, only the dank muck
 and the razor-sharp artifacts passing into the
 past

and the gray Sunflower poised against the sunset,
 crackly bleak and dusty with the smut and smog
 and smoke of olden locomotives in its eye--
 corolla of bleary spikes pushed down and broken like
 a battered crown, seeds fallen out of its face,
 soon-to-be-toothless mouth of sunny air, sunrays
 obliterated on its hairy head like a dried
 wire spiderweb,

leaves stuck out like arms out of the stem, gestures
 from the sawdust root, broke pieces of plaster
 fallen out of the black twigs, a dead fly in its ear,

Unholy battered old thing you were, my sunflower O
 my soul, I loved you then!
 The grime was no man's grime but death and human
 locomotives,
 all that dress of dust, that veil of darkened railroad
 skin, that smog of cheek, that eyelid of black
 mis'ry, that sooty hand or phallus or protuberance
 of artificial worse-than-dirt--industrial--
 modern--all that civilization spotting your
 crazy golden crown
 and those blear thoughts of death and dusty loveless
 eyes and ends and withered roots below, in the
 home-pile of sand and sawdust, rubber dollar
 bills, skin of machinery, the guts and innards
 of the weeping coughing car, the empty lonely
 tincans with their rusty tongues alack, what
 more could I name, the smoked ashes of some
 cock cigar, the cunts of wheelbarrows and the
 milky breasts of cars, wornout asses out of chairs
 & sphincters of dynamos--all these
 entangled in your mummied roots--and you there
 standing before me in the sunset, all your glory
 in your form!
 A perfect beauty of a sunflower! a perfect excellent
 lovely sunflower existence! a sweet natural eye
 to the new hip moon, woke up alive and excited
 grasping in the sunset shadow sunrise golden
 monthly breeze!
 How many flies buzzed round you innocent of your
 grime, while you cursed the heavens of the
 railroad and your flower soul?
 Poor dead flower? when did you forget you were a
 flower? when did you look at your skin and
 decide you were an impotent dirty old locomotive?
 the ghost of a locomotive? the specter and
 shade of a once powerful mad American locomotive?
 You were never no locomotive, Sunflower, you were a
 sunflower!
 And you Locomotive, you are a locomotive, forget me
 not!

So I grabbed up the skeleton thick sunflower and stuck
 it at my side like a scepter,
 and deliver my sermon to my soul, and Jack's soul
 too, and anyone who'll listen,
 --We're not our skin of grime, we're not our dread
 bleak dusty imageless locomotive, we're all
 beautiful golden sunflowers inside, we're blessed
 by our own seed & golden hairy naked
 accomplishment-bodies growing into mad black
 formal sunflowers in the sunset, spied on by our
 eyes under the shadow of the mad locomotive
 riverbank sunset Frisco hilly tincan evening
 sitdown vision.

“Song”

The weight of the world
 is love.
 Under the burden
 of solitude,
 under the burden
 of dissatisfaction

the weight,
 the weight we carry
 is love.

Who can deny?
 In dreams
 it touches
 the body,
 in thought
 constructs
 a miracle,
 in imagination
 anguishes
 till born

in human
looks out of the heart
burning with purity
for the burden of life
is love,

but we carry the weight
wearily,
and so must rest
in the arms of love
at last,
must rest in the arms
of love.

No rest
without love,
no sleep
without dreams
of love
be mad or chill
obsessed with angels
or machines,
the final wish
is love
cannot be bitter,
cannot deny,
cannot withhold
if denied:

the weight is too heavy

must give
for no return
as thought
is given
in solitude
in all the excellence
of its excess.

The warm bodies
 shine together
 in the darkness,
 the hand moves
 to the center
 of the flesh,
 the skin trembles
 in happiness
 and the soul comes
 joyful to the eye

yes, yes,
 that's what
 I wanted,
 I always wanted,
 I always wanted,
 to return
 to the body
 where I was born.

“Wild Orphan”

Blandly mother
 takes him strolling
 by railroad and by river
 -he's the son of the absconded
 hot rod angel-
 and he imagines cars
 and rides them in his dreams,

so lonely growing up among
 the imaginary automobiles
 and dead souls of Tarrytown

to create
 out of his own imagination
 the beauty of his wild
 forebears-a mythology
 he cannot inherit.

Will he later hallucinate
his gods? Waking
among mysteries with
an insane gleam
of recollection?

The recognition-
something so rare
in his soul,
met only in dreams
-nostalgias
of another life.

A question of the soul.
And the injured
losing their injury
in their innocence
-a cock, a cross,
an excellence of love.

And the father grieves
in flophouse
complexities of memory
a thousand miles
away, unknowing
of the unexpected
youthful stranger
bumming toward his door.

“Batmacumba”

Batmakumbayêyê batmakumbaoba
 Batmakumbayêyê batmakumbao
 Batmakumbayêyê batmakumba
 Batmakumbayêyê batmakum
 Batmakumbayêyê batman
 Batmakumbayêyê bat
 Batmakumbayêyê ba
 Batmakumbayêyê
 Batmakumbayê
 Batmakumba
 Batmakum
 Batman
 Bat
 Ba
 Bat
 Batman
 Batmakum
 Batmakumba
 Batmakumbayê
 Batmakumbayêyê
 Batmakumbayêyê ba
 Batmakumbayêyê bat
 Batmakumbayêyê batman
 Batmakumbayêyê batmakum
 Batmakumbayêyê batmakumbao
 Batmakumbayêyê batmakumbaoba

“Baby”

Você precisa saber da piscina
Da margarina
Da Carolina
Da gasolina
Você precisa saber de mim
Baby baby
Eu sei que é assim
Você precisa tomar um sorvete
Na lanchonete
Andar com a gente
Me ver de perto
Ouvir aquela canção do Roberto
Baby baby
Há quanto tempo
Você precisa aprender inglês
Precisa aprender o que eu sei
E o que eu não sei mais
E o que eu não sei mais
Não sei, comigo vai tudo azul
Contigo vai tudo em paz
Vivemos na melhor cidade
Da América do Sul
Da América do Sul
Você precisa
Você precisa
Não sei
Leia na minha camisa
Baby baby
I love you

“Geleia Geral”

Um poeta desfolha a bandeira e a manhã tropical se inicia
 Resplandente, cadente, fagueira num calor girassol com alegria
 Na geleia geral brasileira que o Jornal do Brasil anuncia
 Ê, bumba-yê-yê-boi ano que vem, mês que foi
 Ê, bumba-yê-yê-yê é a mesma dança, meu boi
 A alegria é a prova dos nove e a tristeza é teu porto seguro
 Minha terra é onde o sol é mais limpo e Mangueira é onde o samba é
 mais puro
 Tumbadora na selva-selvagem, Pindorama, país do futuro
 Ê, bumba-yê-yê-boi ano que vem, mês que foi
 Ê, bumba-yê-yê-yê é a mesma dança, meu boi
 É a mesma dança na sala, no Canecão, na TV
 E quem não dança não fala, assiste a tudo e se cala
 Não vê no meio da sala as relíquias do Brasil:
 Doce mulata malvada, um LP de Sinatra, maracujá, mês de abril
 Santo barroco baiano, superpoder de paisano, formiplac e céu de anil
 Três destaques da Portela, carne-seca na janela, alguém que chora por
 mim
 Um carnaval de verdade, hospitaleira amizade, brutalidade jardim
 Ê, bumba-yê-yê-boi ano que vem, mês que foi
 Ê, bumba-yê-yê-yê é a mesma dança, meu boi
 Plurialva, contente e brejeira miss linda Brasil diz “bom dia”
 E outra moça também, Carolina, da janela examina a folia
 Salve o lindo pendão dos seus olhos e a saúde que o olhar irradia
 Ê, bumba-yê-yê-boi ano que vem, mês que foi
 Ê, bumba-yê-yê-yê é a mesma dança, meu boi
 Um poeta desfolha a bandeira e eu me sinto melhor colorido
 Pego um jato, viajo, arrebento com o roteiro do sexto sentido
 Voz do morro, pilão de concreto tropicália, bananas ao vento
 Ê, bumba-yê-yê-boi ano que vem, mês que foi
 Ê, bumba-yê-yê-yê é a mesma dança, meu boi

“Alegria Alegria”

Caminhando contra o vento
Sem lenço sem documento
No sol de quase dezembro
Eu vou
O sol se reparte em crimes
Espaçonaves, guerrilhas
Em Cardinales bonitas
Eu vou
Em caras de presidentes
Em grandes beijos de amor
Em dentes pernas bandeiras
Bomba e Brigitte Bardot
O sol nas bancas de revista
Me enche de alegria e preguiça
Quem lê tanta notícia?
Eu vou
Por entre fotos e nomes
Os olhos cheios de cores
O peito cheio de amores vãos
Eu vou
Por que não? Por que não?
Ela pensa em casamento
E eu nunca mais fui à escola
Sem lenço sem documento
Eu vou
Eu tomo uma coca-cola
Ela pensa em casamento
E uma canção me consola
Eu vou
Por entre fotos e nomes
Sem livros e sem fuzil
Sem fome sem telefone
No coração do Brasil
Ela nem sabe até pensei
Em cantar na televisão
O sol é tão bonito
Eu vou

Sem lenço sem documento
 Nada no bolso ou nas mãos
 Eu quero seguir vivendo amor
 Eu vou
 Por que não? Por que não?

“Domingo no Parque”

O rei da brincadeira - ê, José
 O rei da confusão - ê, João
 Um trabalhava na feira - ê, José
 Outro na construção - ê, João
 A semana passada, no fim da semana
 João resolveu não brigar
 No domingo de tarde saiu apressado
 E não foi pra Ribeira jogar
 Capoeira
 Não foi pra lá pra Ribeira
 Foi namorar
 O José como sempre no fim da semana
 Guardou a barraca e sumiu
 Foi fazer no domingo um passeio no parque
 Lá perto da Boca do Rio
 Foi no parque que ele avistou
 Juliana
 Foi que ele viu
 Juliana na roda com João
 Uma rosa e um sorvete na mão
 Juliana, seu sonho, uma ilusão
 Juliana e o amigo João
 O espinho da rosa feriu Zé
 E o sorvete gelou seu coração
 O sorvete e a rosa - ô, José
 A rosa e o sorvete - ô, José
 Oi, dançando no peito - ô, José
 Do José brincalhão - ô, José
 O sorvete e a rosa - ô, José
 A rosa e o sorvete - ô, José
 Oi, girando na mente - ô, José
 Do José brincalhão - ô, José

Juliana girando - oi, girando
Oi, na roda gigante - oi, girando
Oi, na roda gigante - oi, girando
O amigo João - João
O sorvete é morango - é vermelho
Oi, girando, e a rosa - é vermelha
Oi, girando, girando - é vermelha
Oi, girando, girando - olha a faca!
Olha o sangue na mão - ê, José
Juliana no chão - ê, José
Outro corpo caído - ê, José
Seu amigo, João - ê, José
Amanhã não tem feira - ê, José
Não tem mais construção - ê, João
Não tem mais brincadeira - ê, José
Não tem mais confusão - ê, João