The Tyranny of Cool: Orthodoxy, Heresy and the 1960s Counterculture

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Countercultural Heresy Today

At the outbreak of Covid-19, and with Western societies stunned temporarily into unity, it was easy (and comforting) to forget the previous four years of angry culture war. Even as Donald Trump continued to spat with the media, and American politics remained snared in pro and anti Trump debate, the differences about political correctness that had been everywhere only three months before seemed to have been set aside. Outrage from the left at offensive tweeting, and from the right at the excesses of "woke" culture had moved unsurprisingly down the pecking order of stories that made the news.

But the nationalist populist movements that harnessed such outrage remained symptomatic. They represented and still do represent a backlash against the progressive politics of race, gender and sexuality that had slowly been assimilated as orthodoxies into mainstream discourse since the 1960s. As I write, America has once again descended into twitter war with itself – this time in response to the very serious matters of another unarmed black man killed by white police, and the most widespread race riot the country has seen since the sixties. If anyone needed proof that our new culture wars were on pause rather than over, and that the polarizing after-effects of that backlash were here to stay, this appears to be it. After three months of focus on physical and economic rather than identity political health, attitudes to race are again right at the center of public discourse.

This essay is an attempt to give context to the current situation, and to that post-2016 heretical turn. Liberal and left-leaning shock over Trump, Brexit and continental far right nationalism – and to new conservative reactions against race protests taking place right now – has a lot to do with these movements' rejection of values that had for decades been embedding as articles of faith. Trump's calls to 'build a wall', to acknowledge 'good on both sides' of Alt Right and Antifa clashes at Charlottesville in

2017, and now to respond to ‘looting’ with ‘shooting’ are all provocative, calculated heresy – designed to pick at taboos about race, gender and even fascism that had remained untouched by mainstream politicians since at least the 1970s. As Jonathan Haidt pointed out in the wake of that Charlottesville debacle, Trump committed ‘a desecration—of the story shared by most Americans in which we are not a nation based on “blood and soil,” [but one of] immigrants who [have] accepted the American creed.’ If, and as Haidt suggests, this contaminated Trump in the eyes of the orthodoxy, it renewed his power in the eyes of those challenging it.[1]

What I aim for here is a longer view – an analysis that reaches further back in cultural history than Haidt, past the mainstreaming of political correctness in the 1990s, past even the rise of feminism in the late sixties, to the counterculture whose spirit first generated the ideas being rejected today. It was there, in the heat of inter-generational battle that our tenets of multiculturalism, globalism, and gender and sexual tolerance were forged. I want to look back to that period – and a selection of talismanic poets, novelists and public intellectuals who defined it – to gain a better understanding of the backlash against those tenets in recent years; to consider the beginnings of the revolution that shaped the moral and political certitudes of the next sixty. In what ways and through which means did the heretical spirit of the 1950s and 60s their contemporaries and immediate literary descendants result in the orthodox position? What exclusionary and politically contradictory criteria did they employ? Finally, what lessons can be learned from the 1950s and 60s about the current turn against identity politics, a turn that is presented by many involved as the new, true counterculture?

Today’s “countercultural” rebranding is the preserve not only of Alt Right kids trolling the “liberal establishment”, but academics and self-styled public intellectuals on platforms like Patreon and Youtube.[2] From the rock-star Canadian psychologist Jordan Peterson and political talking head Ben Shapiro, lapsed leftist Dave Rubin to heretical black thinkers on race like Candace Owens, these anti-leftist but not always right wing commentators have gained huge traction with young people by decrying as old-fashioned the ‘peace and love’ values they were raised to obey.[3] Disparate in many ways, they share a common gripe about an overemphasis on rights rather than

responsibilities characterized as taking root in the 1960s and morphing into totalitarian proscriptions against offensive language from the next decade onwards.

Peterson's best-selling message against "Social Justice Warriors" and "woke-ness" is grounded loosely in the belief that a decent fight for acknowledgement of civil liberties took a wrong turn towards their repression in later years. If his humorless, messianic style is cause for worry – and if it is worth keeping an eye on the kind of paternal influence he exerts over millions of young, admiring men – the objection is not entirely unreasonable.[4] As many centrists and moderate leftists have begun to point out, one does not have to be a disbeliever in white privilege or the gender pay gap to see that the online public shaming of politically incorrect language and behavior has gathered a McCarthyite mob tenor. And that such a development is unbecoming of any politics that claims to be progressive.

An examination of the 1960s counterculture can provide cultural historical grounding to this next, healthy stage of response to nationalist populism – in which anger and outrage are giving way to sober realization, and an attempt at least at diagnosis and cure. In order to appreciate where we are with a set of public moral codes, to see and respond clearly to their rupture by people who find them abhorrent we need to at least question where they might be going wrong – and to do this it is necessary to consider how they emerged and what route they have taken subsequently. With what kind of spirit, and in what kind of language was the first move to make the personal political undertaken? What did it inherit and what did it discard from the original countercultural mission it was succeeding? And what conclusions do the answers to these questions allow us to draw today?

Reformation

Todd Gitlin (1987) and James J. Farrell (1997) – two scholars with a background in 1960s activism – have pointed out that the "personalist" movement that catalyzed the decade's push for equal gender, racial and sexual rights was heretical not only in a political but religious sense. The many various subcultures that combined to produce the spirit of protest – a spirit that contributed first to a change in mood then to

legislation – were united by a desire to speak spiritual truth to social, political and indeed established religious power.[5]

Before mass marches against the Vietnam War, before any laws protecting black, female or homosexual civil rights, the post-war cultural-political landscape was altered by a set of spiritual rebellions against rational secular or orthodox religious approaches to society. From Catholic peace activists like Peter Maurin, Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton, and influential 'beat' writers of the San Francisco poetry scene like Allen Ginsberg, Kenneth Rexroth and Gary Snyder, to Martin Luther King Jr. and his now legendary Baptist movement for black civil rights, those who prepared the ground for American social and cultural change did so with the purpose of setting the nation on a purer spiritual path – promoting the nurture of the dignity of the individual person as the first step towards reform, and prerequisite for a shift in material relations, rather than the usual other way round.[6]

Different both to the Old Leftism of the pre-war period and the mainstream progressive liberalism of a generation who came of age during the New Deal, these movements emphasized the mistreatment not of the common man at the hands of industrial classes or market forces, but human spiritual potential in the service of brutal irreligious calculation. Refusing to participate in civil defense atomic bomb drills in 1955, Aamon Hennacy, Peter Maurin and Dorothy Day presented their pacifism as a Franciscan defense of the human person against the collective violence of 'modern institutions, including war, the nation-state, and both Marxist and capitalist economies'.[7] Collecting his Nobel Prize for Peace in 1964, a year before his famous march on Washington, Martin Luther King appealed to Christians across the country by framing segregation not in terms of the economy or a liberal standard of universal human rights but as a 'spiritual and moral lag' that needed to be 'redeemed'.[8]

For their part, the poets and novelists who became known as the Beat Generation – and who are the main subjects of this essay – captured the imagination of young readers from the late fifties to the present day by taking literary style and explicit politics out of the equation and modeling a way of thinking, feeling and behaving that venerated spiritual honesty and personal good.

This emphasis on the "personal" over the social; this appeal to a common spiritual humanity over and above issues of practical political organization; is one of the reasons Gitlin and others have given for comparing the Counterculture to the sixteenth century Reformation. Rather than class revolution to build afresh, or pragmatic improvements to the old model, the templates for the new youth politics in the 1960s were a righting of offense against humane Christian principles; the principles on which its members had been brought up to believe America was founded.

Like the first Martin Luther in 1517, young post-war counter-culturalists were 'disgusted by the corruption of values' they perceived in mid twentieth century America, and 'beat on the doors of established power in the name of reform'.[9] Like Luther's project too, this one involved a demand for progress not via the installation of new political ideals necessarily but the reaffirmation of timeless spiritual ones. Where the early Lutherans kicked out at corrupt, arrogant power and its claim to mediate God's indulgence, the hippies took umbrage with discrimination because it 'discredited the dream – a dream they already felt ambivalent about' 'inalienable' rights of the individual, unquestionable aim of American society.[10]

Beat Heresy

Clearly, poets have less direct influence on social change than activists. The demonstrable links between Hennacy, Maurin and Day's protests and the huge impact of the Anti-Vietnam War movement of the mid sixties, or between King's nonviolent campaign and the passing of civil rights acts cannot be made between say Allen Ginsberg's reading of his poem 'Howl' (1957) and the lifting of restrictions on homosexual behavior in the 1970s. But the Beat Generation that Ginsberg spearheaded reveals something about this important period in American cultural history that more active movements cannot. Symptomatic of a change in young mindsets, tastes and ideas in the late forties and early fifties, and instrumental in the development of a new temperament in the late fifties and the 1960s, their writing and public statements – and the sensation with which they were received on television and

in the popular press – are useful documents of the heretical energy I'm aiming to explore.

The first bohemian school to be packaged and consumed as popular culture, and a major influence on 1960s folk and rock and roll, they had an unprecedented impact in the lives of young people then and afterwards. Beginning on the fringes in late 1940s, by the late fifties they had developed into a cult influence on creative and intellectuals in the know ('would be artists ... in [Greenwich] village', in Gitlin's words, as well as sociologists like Paul Goodman, and activists like Abbie Hoffman).[11] In the sixties though they became a a direct pop cultural reference point for everyone from Jim Morrison to John Lennon, and were regularly reported on in national magazines like *Tim*e and *Life*, and internationally as far and wide as the British tabloids.[12]

Pop celebrities rather than ordinary author or public intellectuals, the expressly apolitical Beat Generation impacted the way young people reframed politics – in particular the shift towards viewing the personal in cultural terms, and shaping culture through personal poetics. On top of this, the kind of freedom the Beats came to symbolize in the sixties – of body and spirit from puritanical constraint – carried with it sexual and racial overtones that were to be called out as unacceptable in the transition towards a more proscriptive politics of identity towards the end of the decade and in the 1970s. In their changing reception we get a glimpse of wider changes in the national approach to these issues.

The spiritual rebellion Ginsberg and his Columbia classmate Jack Kerouac are most famous for is the example they set by sourcing Eastern religions in their work (Zen Buddhism for Kerouac, mixed together with the Catholicism of his upbringing, and a combination of Buddhism, Kabbalah and Hare Krishna for Ginsberg). This *was* a major and groundbreaking contribution. If other students, artists and mystics across the continent got there before them – people like the pacifist poet-monk Thomas Merton, mentioned earlier – it was they whose fame brought these unorthodox spiritual practices to wider Western public consciousness.

But that unorthodoxy was motivated by a more old-fashioned impulse. Like much American artistic rebellion, Beat heresy was driven by nostalgia for a lost American

idyll – a purity of constitutional purpose they believed had been dwindling since the acceleration of capitalism in the late nineteenth century. Looking back to the poet Walt Whitman, and his essayist mentor Ralph Waldo Emerson, and coveting their first American Renaissance in the mid nineteenth century, the young student-age Beats positioned themselves as a post-1945 reboot. In their lifestyles, their work and the public appearances they made in the late fifties once their books began to sell, one of the tenets of Beat philosophy was the resurrection of Whitman's mission in his foundational poem 'Song of Myself': to use travel and literature to celebrate essential American freedoms, based on the holiness of the individual person, and his or her connection to the nation's democratic constituent parts.[13]

Sourcing Whitman, along with his British Romantic precursors, they sought to recapture a vision of America as a new frontier for the spirit – one that was free from puritanical anxieties about the sins of the flesh, and that found a means of genuine spiritual transcendence in acceptance of the body, its desires and expressions. Ginsberg's 1955 poem 'Footnote to Howl' – which accompanies 'Howl''s famous peon to 'the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness' and which declares 'the world … the soul … the skin … the nose … the tone and cock and hand and asshole' to be 'holy' – is a deliberate updating of Whitman's own determination to 'dismiss whatever insults your own soul, and your very flesh shall be a great poem and have the richest fluency not only in its words but in the silent lines of its lips and face and between the lashes of your eyes and in every motion and joint of your body'.[14] And, like Whitman – like Martin Luther, and religious heretics going back as far as the early Christians in Rome – his poetic utopian goal is to free mankind from the shackles of a false proscriptive organized religion and into the truth of the spirit as first revealed.

Looking to the 'good grey bard' as prophet, Ginsberg wrote that 'Whitman [had] long ago complained that unless the material power of America were leavened by some kind of spiritual infusion we would wind up among the "fabled damned"'.[15] 'It seems we're approaching that state as far as I can see', he went on, and that the 'only way out is individuals taking responsibility and saying what they actually feel – which is an enormous human achievement in any society'.[16] Ginsberg and Kerouac saw their refusal to conform to social and sexual moral codes – living promiscuously, and in

Ginsberg's case as a homosexual for most of his life – and their itinerant lifestyles as part of the same quest to re-purify, and to absolve a culture that had gone awry. In their minds at least, the point of attacking American modernity – its post-war shibboleths of mass consumerism, the comfortable Christian family unity and centrist liberal government – was not the nihilistic destruction frightened or scathing critics believed but its wholesale redemption.

Along with rootlessness (documented in much of Kerouac's writing but famously in his breakthrough novel *On the Road*); along with sexual permissiveness; their rebellion was expressed through loosened narrative and metrical form, celebratory obscenity, and the transcription of thought in the midst of psychedelic or religious transcendental experience. Looking for a style that was 'fast, mad, confessional, completely serious', Kerouac moved further and further away from careful crafting of plot, character or atmosphere and towards a type of loose and improvisational autobiography – one that imitated the unpunctuated rhythms and cadences of the jazz trumpet playing he loved.[17]

For similar reasons and with some similar effects, Ginsberg evolved from a young poet experimenting with imagistic and lyrical forms to one who combined these with a version of Whitman's long line method. The "long line" had been a radical mid nineteenth century attempt to bring poetry closer in sound to natural (American) thought and speech, and it involved the continuation of each line until the full thought or impression had been expressed. For Ginsberg it had the added and more radical advantage of capturing thought as it emerges in breath through the body, allowing the poet not only to put in words felt impulses before they have been edited and made presentable by the mind, but to think and feel more naturally too.[18]

All of this was part of his intellectually disciplined quest to communicate in new ways by heightening his own consciousness, a quest he hoped would inspire a chain reaction in his readers. If Whitman enabled Ginsberg to envisage himself, Kerouac and others – people like Gregory Corso, Gary Snyder, Michael McClure, whom he met when he moved to San Francisco in the mid fifties – as prophetic bards, mandated to sing America back into life, this more fundamental belief in spiritual transcendence came first from William Blake. It was Blake's voice that Ginsberg claimed to have

heard when he had his epiphany that he was ‘born to be poet’, and he and his fellow Beats were mesmerized by the Romantic poet’s famous late eighteenth century dictum that ‘if the doors of perception were cleansed everything would appear to man as it is, infinite.’[19] Along with Arthur Rimbaud’s “long, prodigious, and rational disordering (derangement) of all the senses’, that statement by Blake helped the Beats and the Counterculture that followed them conceptualize their sense of a world beyond the mean limits of our own. The inspiration for Aldous Huxley in 1954 and Jim Morrison in the late sixties, it suggested a reality in which rational, social and political organization no longer impeded on the individual’s capacity to feel and behave in accordance with his or her deeper nature.[20]

That emphasis on freedom also meant using performance to dismantle puritanical hang-ups about sexual desire and identity – poetry readings like Ginsberg’s famous first of his career-defining poem ‘Howl’ at the Six Gallery in San Francisco in 1955; or another of the same poem in New York, where he shocked the audience by removing all his clothes before speaking. And it meant turning away from mainstream middle class white American culture and towards groups whose marginalization and victimhood the Beats coded as more authentic. From black America, (in Kerouac’s and Ginsberg’s case) from Native America (in the case of their Beat contemporary Gary Snyder), from the criminal underclass who they encountered first on Times Square while students in New York, they appropriated ways of thinking, speaking and seeing to mark themselves out against the uniformity of the respectable world their relative privilege had prepared them for.

In their seminal works, bohemian, university educated Kerouac and Ginsberg showed young readers a way to protest against that uniformity, and against the increasing mechanization of modern society, by sanctifying and channeling the voices of those who were alienated by both. By refusing to settle down into a routine domestic or working life, by travelling from place to place with his car-thieving delinquent companion Neal Cassady, by telling his experiences of the black jazz clubs of Denver, the junkie underworld of Mexico City and migrant fruit-picking scene on the American-Mexican border, Kerouac believed he had taken himself out of what his and Ginsberg’s friend William Burroughs called ‘the control machine’; and defended

himself against 'the machinery – police, education, etc. - used by a group in power to keep itself in power and extend its power'.[21]

Ginsberg, who was more explicitly leftist, was also more prone to talk about these issues in relation to "the masses". As his presence and Kerouac's absence on later marches for peace demonstrate, Ginsberg viewed those systems of power as a sinister means of imposing uniformity of thought on an unsuspecting population. In 'Howl', he posits the average American as cannibalized and enslaved by the brutal false idol of money, machinery and scientifically rendered progress: 'Moloch, whose name is the Mind' and who had 'bashed open their skulls and ate up their brains and imagination'.[22]

Problems with the Beats' romanticizing of race and unrespectable poverty – obvious now, and pointed out by African American writers like James Baldwin and Ralph Ellison as early as the late fifties – are matched by this spiritual elitism about the masses and by a philosophical pessimism in their thinking that contradicted their desire to bring people and the country together. As we'll see, the challenge to American modernity that Kerouac and Ginsberg promoted was compromised by a fascination with original sin (for Kerouac's part), and the pessimistic and fatalistic philosophies of early twentieth century European modernisms (for he and Ginsberg). As well as Whitman, as well as an American Romantic tradition that promised infinite possibility for the individual who could perceive self and nation in its full and wonderful diversity, they took inspiration from thinkers who read human history as determined and finite.

To the chagrin of liberal and conservative critics and the thrill of younger readers in their day, the purity of thought, feeling and organization that the Beats were after was steeped in a fundamental rejection of Enlightenment models of Reason. In place of rational precepts underpinning modern society – from central government down to local family units – they wanted, as Ginsberg and Kerouac's ally in poetry Michael McClure put it, true 'voice … and … vision'.[23] In service of what they saw as a deeper, and spiritual humanism, they pushed a particular form of *anti*-humanism, one that figured progress through scientific advancement as a sham – a dangerous blind alley that had led to the injustice of grossly unequal capitalist societies, and the

extreme barbarities of Auschwitz and Atomic Nuclear warfare. In its place, they wanted a return to pre-capitalist emotional and spiritual first principles.

The novelist John Clellon Holmes, part of Kerouac and Ginsberg circle and the first to define it in print, summed up this approach: 'the burden of my generation', he wrote, 'was the knowledge that something rational had caused all this … and that nothing rational could end it'.[24] The solution to the organized, reasonably sanctioned disaster they perceived, Michael McClure announced, was a form of mercy arrived at through contemplation of the spiritual: 'the criticism of society is that "Society" is merciless. The alternative is private, individual acts of mercy'.[25] That paradoxically anti-humanist impulse – a vital building block the sociologist Theodore Roszak identified in the 'making of the 1960s counterculture' – might have been framed as a humane descendent of American Romanticism, but it can also be traced to the Beats' enthrallment to the provocatively elitist and apocalyptic theories of history put forward by the German Oswald Spengler at the turn of the twentieth century.[26]

Heresy over-ground

If the Beats' experiments had been socially, culturally and artistically heretical in the 1950s, that heresy went over-ground with them in the next decade. Beat ideas entered the mainstream via sensationalist articles in the popular press, television specials and the new pop culture television was facilitating. The newly expanding marketplace embraced Kerouac and his friends' books about bohemian living, and turned them into overnight celebrities – reluctantly in Kerouac's case, and rather more eagerly in Ginsberg's.[27] Kerouac – by then prematurely aged by alcoholism, and bitter at the misunderstanding of his original 'beatific' vision – was both lauded and laughed at for having sired the hippie movement, and he made various uncomfortable appearances on cultural and political television shows to protest his seriousness. The media-savvy and spotlight ready Ginsberg, on the other hand, welcomed every chance he was given to publicize the school and secure its legacy as the one that had kick-started everything.

However inaccurate the press translation of their mission – and Kerouac had every right to complain about the popular parody of his pretentious, hedonistic "beatnik"

cult – its key tenets passed on to many of the next generation intact.[28] In literature, a rash of new rebellious novelists took up their mantle – most famous amongst them Ken Kesey, whose own book about the madness of the system, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1962) was popular enough to have been turned into a Broadway play by the time he was 27, but who chose to put his promising career on hold for Beat-like adventures on the road. With a group of like-minded educated drop-outs, who he christened his 'merry pranksters', Kesey fitted out an old camper van with speakers and beds, painted it bright psychedelic colours, and travelled from town to town trying to "turn people on". That journey – motivated and defined by Kesey's discovery of LSD – was documented by Tom Wolfe in his book *The Electric Koolaid Acid Test* (1967) and had a direct link back to Kerouac through Neal Cassady, Kerouac's speed-addled muse in *On the Road* and the man Kesey commandeered to pilot his own.

The next more active and political counterculture (out on the road not just for escape or *escapades* but a new form of re-settlement, and energized by new conceptions of the collective) was, as Burroughs puts it, a 'logical conclusion' to their 'originally nonpolitical' one. If *On the Road* was talismanic by its homage to unplanned, liberating individual travel – the hitching of lifts down highways with one or two companions and testing of conscience, desire and resolve away from social comfort and expectation – Kesey's communal and exhibitionist experiments with his Merry Pranksters updated that for the 60s counterculture. Kerouac rejected such exhibitionism – and he registered this not only on television, but in person to Kesey when asked to join the group in San Francisco – but his own bid for freedom was one of the main catalysts that had set Kesey on to 'the wild road'.[29] Kesey's mind expansive journey – which involved a small commune of fellow travellers and the loud announcement of their presence everywhere they went not only by the bus' bright swirling colors but absurdist megaphone delivered slogans – was a deliberate opening out of that initial, personal Beat quest for freedom. Filmed by Kesey himself, and documented in print by a journalist like Wolfe rather than a novelist or poet, the experiment marked the transmutation of Beat ideas from literary to social form.

At a broader societal level, Todd Gitlin has shown that a new generation of unprecedentedly cash-rich middle class teenagers were inspired if not always to

follow in the Beats' footsteps, then at least think of them as hallowed. Indeed, by the mid sixties, a version of what Kerouac predicted in his novel *The Dharma Bums* had begun to materialize:

> A great rucksack revolution, thousands or even millions of young Americans wandering around with their rucksacks, going up mountains to pray, making children laugh … wild gangs of holy men getting together to drink and talk and pray … to meditate and ignore society.[30]

That statement feeds easily into the caricature of naive entitlement that was mooted then and has become a cliché of its own today. Looked at from conservative, liberal and indeed materialist left perspectives, the Beat-countercultural rebellion was inconsequential at best and distractive at worst – a bid by 'well fed orphans of Western culture' for kicks and freedom disconnected from hard questions of how a society should be organized, and how production and materials apportioned.[31]

But the attitude they articulated – non-political in the conventional sense – had major indirect effects on the aspirations of the next, more engaged generation. The novelist William Burroughs, Kerouac and Ginsberg's great friend and mentor at Columbia and the third principle member of the original Beat circle, had it right when he defined their impact as 'social' more than literary. Older and less romantic than either of them – unconvinced in fact that 'Beat' was anything more than a PR handle – Burroughs reflected in the 1980s on a lifestyle and rebellion that had symptomized and affected something larger. For better and worse – for the radicalizing of attitudes and the predictable, absurd hand they had in shifting ''a trillion Levi's [and] a million espresso coffee machines' – this group of early hipsters put non-conformism on the agenda for millions of otherwise insulated kids.[32] For James Farrell, their social influence was 'meta-political' – by asserting their nonconformist independence in print and coffeehouse performance, they demonstrated a means of implicit political expression through engagement with culture rather than parties.[33]

Crucially, the youth appeal of that cultural-political hybrid – which reached its peak when Bob Dylan's Beat inspired aesthetic blew up in 1963 – showed the way both to the next crop of radical organizers, and to a burgeoning one of mass marketers. From

David McReynolds of the 1960s War Resisters League – who Farrell cites attributing his 'politics of action' to the 'notice' served by the Beats on how to engage young people – to the Beat enthralled Abbie Hoffman's founding of the radical Youth International Party in 1967 (The Yippies), their self-images and ideas bore much activist fruit.[34] Since the modernist movements at the start of the twentieth century, politically provocative art had been energizing small groups of young people, but this was something different. For the first time, avant-garde writing was able to impact mass youth public consciousness.

By the 1990s – when Kerouac and Ginsberg were used in advertising campaigns for Gap (not Levi's), and Burroughs provided the dry voiceover for a Nike commercial – their cultural rebellion had well and truly had the politics washed out of it. Part of the Beats' transformation from heretical to orthodox has to do with that corporatizing of their image. Along with so many symbols and slogans of the 1960s – from CND to "flower power" (a term invented by Ginsberg) – they now conjured feelings of comfort and nostalgia, rather than unease or dissent. But that dwindling capacity to shock is itself evidence of their enormous initial legacy. Kerouac and his friends' attractive rebellions against work-a-day sedentary life, their exploration of an America without borders, and even their disregard for possessions, contributed to the gradual drift in the sixties towards an internationalist and humanistic public discourse that is now not only familiar but the common parlance of politicians, CEOs and admen.

Their impact on the imaginations of leftist organizers in the 60s, and on the young people who marched behind them at first altered popular attitudes towards civil rights and military engagement in Vietnam. In successive decades – as those idealistic organizers and marchers gained age and influence – the issues that had outraged them in their youth naturally began to be associated with good political practice, and social progress. Since the 1960s, since the civil rights acts and military withdrawal that a Beat reared generation helped bring about, successive governments have been forced to factor in concern about racial inequality and the inhumaneness of violence in foreign lands in the interest of national security. From Nixon and Ford to the Democrat Bill Clinton – who played up and on his activism against the Vietnam War,

and for Civil Rights – presidents since the sixties have responded to pubic opinion shaped by that decade's personalist, internationalist politics.

If Kesey and others like him showed young, rebellious Americans a way to revel in, advertise and disseminate their heresy, the next stage in countercultural evolution involved its consolidation. The merry pranksters – who crashed a democratic convention, as well as a Unitarian church AGM on their way across the continent – were the first of many carnival shows to treat Beat non-conformism as a national event. Preempting Timothy Leary's mass media reported experiments with acid, and his call for young people to use psychedelics to rise above 'old men's politicking'; setting an example too to the Hait Ashberty San Francisco hippie scene that was still rarified and bohemian and not yet the teeming Mecca it would become; Kesey wasn't just denouncing and extricating himself from square convention. He was denouncing that convention as old news – an outdated religion worthy of and bound for ridicule by a new group of dynamic young explorers who could see things as they really were.

Over the course of the 60s, and with Kerouac increasingly depressed and incredulous, Ginsberg re-conceptualized Beat to align it with that communal instinct. His poetry scene in San Francisco became the focal point, and – in direct contradiction of Kerouac's feelings about hippie culture – he fed the popular line about *On the Road* and its sequel *Visions of Cody* (written 1951-2, but published in 1972) as genuine bibles of 1960s dissidence. Ginsberg's adoption of Bob Dylan as his mentee in 1963, and his repetition on the theme of 'passing the torch' to the next generation, obscures the fundamental difference between a heresy that celebrated its marginality and one that felt it had history on its side and was getting ready to the clear the path. Indeed, there is a significant, and instructive difference between the 'howls' and prayers against the system in Kerouac's – and the younger Ginsberg's major works and Dylan's self-confident injunction to the older generation in 'The Times They Are A-Changing', to 'get out of the old road if you can't lend a hand'. [35]

Pride, Shame and Orthodoxy

Perhaps most interestingly though, the Beats themselves fell foul of the next stage in counter-cultural historical development. The purity of vision they had enshrined in the

late fifties, and that the young Kesey and Dylan had aimed to realize, made way for a new spiritual ideal that emphasized virtue and sin in bolder and more binary ways. After the Beats, after the Merry Pranksters, and the Summer of Love, and after the wider mass protests against segregation and the Vietnam War, the countercultural mood adjusted at the end of sixties to account for more finely wrought definitions of human dignity and of what it meant to offend against it.

Emerging from the same bohemian enclaves that had produced then venerated the Beats, and writing for many of the same publications, a group of radically political female intellectuals repositioned the first heresy as an orthodox establishment itself in need of reform. If the Beats had attacked the systemic violence behind materialism, racism and military intervention, women like Kate Millett, Shulamith Firestone, Barbara Ehrenreich – who grew up reading Kerouac and Ginsberg – turned their attention to language rather than action, and convicted these professed revolutionaries of exactly the conservatism they were attacking.

Second Wave of Feminism highlighted important overlooked problems with the 1950s and 60s counterculture. Ehrenreich's critique of the Beats – and Kate Millett's inaugural, notorious attack on their sexual revolutionary forebear Henry Miller – drew necessary attention to a hypocrisy at the heart of countercultural thinking: that the bid for individual spiritual freedom, mercy, and peaceful coexistence also depended on the celebratory assertion of male sexual dominance.[36] This movement brought to the surface what many women involved in the movement already knew deeply – that their sidelining and/or mistreatment were among a host of paradoxical ends to which the push for individual spiritual freedom had always been inclined.

If female artists had lived and worked alongside the Beats from the start, from the authors Joyce Johnson and Joan Vollmer to painter-writer Caroline Cassady, their representation in its fiction and folkloric retelling was as one dimensional as in any older, less 'hip' avant-garde. And in the film of Ken Kesey's magic bus tour of America, there is a disturbing subtext in the figure of "Stark Naked", a young woman whose sexual abandon under acid is celebrated, but who ends up ditched by the roadside when her mind unravels. Garnering perhaps even more shock power than the

Beats had in the 1950s, writers like Millet then Ehrenreich called out such hypocrisies – identifying the exposers of the inhuman system as its unwitting exponents.

But they also symptomized a new, lasting and perhaps questionable shift in countercultural logic – from emancipatory alone, to emancipatory and proscriptive. In contrast to the original countercultural aim of liberating self through radical expression of the "unspeakable" (whether mystical vision or obscenity), the freedom of self that Second Wave Feminism desired was dependent on the condemnation of others. Both stages of rebellion counseled the individual's release from social constraints, and from the shame these imposed, but that release was achieved by Kerouac and Ginsberg through the expression of hidden feeling, and through lamentation or anger at the system; whereas Millett, her peers and successors needed their shame displaced onto the system, and the system in the form of corrupt, inhuman people perceived as manifesting its evil. Their call to embargo art that had recently stood for freedom suggests a new emphasis on defining and enforcing orthodoxy in American 'countercultural' thought after 1969.

Norman Mailer – one of Millett's main, and most justified targets – went hyperbolically far in his warning that Second Wave Feminism was about to give way to a McCarthy-like leftist totalitarianism.[37] Himself a figurehead of the Counterculture – champion of Kerouac and Ginsberg, editor of the Beat friendly magazine *The Village Voice,* and author of his own 'philosophy of hip' – Mailer's objection preempted Peterson, and the other recent bombastic critics of political correctness mentioned at the start of this essay.[38] From Peterson and Ben Shapiro, to unorthodox Sex Positive feminists like Camille Paglia, the anti-PC personalities who are now making the news would probably seize on Mailer's comment as prophetic for our times. Indeed, in the new, common representation of identity politics as the overemphasis on group rights over individual responsibility, much is made of a Leftist cultural project that was determined to succeed where totalitarian Marxist politics in the West had not (Peterson 2018; Paglia 2015).

Clichéd and simplistic – compromised by connection to a partisan theory of "the liberal left" conspiring for 'postmodernist cultural neo-Marxism' dominion – this line of argument skirts over the pressing reasons for radical feminist and black activist

movements in the first place. Focusing on the excesses of 'Social Justice Warriors' today – and on examples of unwarranted, self-important offense taking – it refuses to consider the genuine psychological harm that 'consciousness raising' of non-whites and women aimed to redress; much less its positive and in fact practical intention to lessen prejudicial feeling among whites towards blacks, and men towards women, and thereby reduce real physical violence between groups. Such reductions and distortions, however, threaten to distract from a grain of truth these figures have inherited from the leftist Mailer and others like him (Peterson 2018, p. 302).

Paglia particularly has noted what Mailer worried about in the late sixties – that a movement based on spiritual radicalism has been supplanted by a radicalism more rarified in its language, and regulatory in its politics of identity. For all its faults, the 60s counterculture had, as Paglia points out, been interested in the opening of the Western mind to ideas about the body and soul beyond narrow monotheistic intellectual constraints. By checking expression for its fidelity to ever evolving standards of progress, the politics of identity from the seventies onwards have reaffirmed old dualisms rather than building on a noble bid for greater intellectual and existential pluralism.

With this in mind, we might imagine Ginsberg, Kerouac and their contemporaries despairing at the world for which their project laid the foundations – and not only for the simple surface reason that they have ended up to some degree "cancelled". From a progressive "countercultural" perspective in 2020, development as a human means continual inspection of the self for the diseases of prejudice one carries and disseminates. The inner quest for authenticity has evolved into an inner quest for pure moral intention. This is a phenomena set in motion in the late 1960s, and developed through the ever finer narrowing down of group categories and their differences, and of the ways in which those differences intersect. As Todd Gitlin put it – perhaps over-polemically – as early as 1987, intersectional identity politics is compromised by:

> a narcissism of small differences, each group claiming the high ground of principle, squandering moral energy in behalf of what has come to be called "identity politics" – in which the principle purpose of organizing is to express a distinct social identity rather than achieve the collective good. In this radical

> extension of the politics of the late 60s, difference and victimization are prized, ranked against the victimization of other groups. We crown our good with victimhood.[39]

Beat Elitism

And yet, despite their difference to what became of the counterculture, the Beats played their own significant philosophical part in this logic of group oppression. Indeed, Millett's new focus on the violence of words, and on the unconscious systemic evils those words might express, was in many ways only an extension of the contempt her male subjects expressed for the orthodox bourgeois establishment, and the masses of ordinary people who conformed to it. Hers was the latest expression of a dichotomy between the free heretical thinker and upholder of the oppressive orthodoxy that had been there in the Old Left of pre-war America, and that dominated Beat thinking and the youth rebellion it inspired after.

Much of that dichotomous thinking naturally had its precedent in the Marxism she and other radicals were sourcing. As Gitlin puts it – based on interviews with people brought up in American Communist households ('red diaper babies' in the sociologist slang) – there was an abiding and unsurprising sense among these groups of being part of a 'secret society of the elect'; a tacit understanding that '*We* lived by distinct values: justice, equality, peace. *They*, the rest of America, were persecutors, or pawns in the hands of neocolonialists'.[40] Those values, and that mentality of us and them, had been kept alive in middle class circles by pre-Dylan folk music scene of Woodie Guthrie and – and by their 'conjuring of an ideal [American] folk' who needed protecting from the evil empire.[41] In the hands of people whose marginality was involuntary and the result either of their gender or skin colour, rather than a brave but lifestyle associated choice, they took on more urgent, radical and legitimate expression.

However, their opposition of oppressed and therefore redeemable and redemptive to oppressive and therefore irredeemable was connected to the Beats' own of "hip" and "square". The Beats' championing of uncensored individual expression, of the individual's right to affirm his or her identity outside of societal norms, and of the

body and spirit in opposition to the restrictive patriarchal intellectual rules of the establishment helped lay the ground for radical thinking by feminists like Kate Millett. So too did their veneration of the oppressed and marginalised as authentic and the oppressive and centralised as its opposite. Millett's blackballing of former countercultural heroes like D.H. Lawrence and Henry Miller indicated a first move towards the hardening of those positions from heresies into orthodoxies – a development of the 1950s and 60s quest for authenticity of the self into a new test for moral purity.

Running through all of this – even, especially the merciful, spiritual and apolitical Beat scene – was a fierce, contradictory elitism. Indeed, James Farrell has pointed out that Ginsberg and his peers' interest in 'American tenderheartedness' was from the start contradicted by a hipster creed that accepted insensitivity in the interest of personal freedom, and – at its most extreme – promoted violence in daily life as valid protest against the collective violence of society. This is the 'hipster' portrayed by Mailer in his long, racially problematic essay *The White Negro* – a caricature of the 'beat' hero, tough and cool as a black criminal, and existentially alive to possibility in each moment. And it speaks to the existence of two contradictory aspects of the same culture; opposed but inseparable from one another, and suggestive of a major problem at the heart of the Beat vision.

That vision was inseparable from a damaging and enduring myth about the anomie of the cow-towing masses – those who have never really lived, and whose disapproval is coveted as a badge of honour. Seeking authenticity of self – and according to strong conceptions of artistic, spiritual and existential purity – the Beats jettisoned the ordinary America that their heroes Emerson, Whitman and Thoreau had in fact rhapsodized. Rather than democratic or communitarian, to be 'beat' was to be aware and protective of a secret – that the rules everyone else conformed to were absurd. It was to be tired out by a system that ordinary people pandered and conformed to, and courageous enough to express your true, unconditioned self – a self the conception of which depended on its difference to the masses. Concerned with and shaped by its marginality – and by its vicarious existence through the material and racial marginality of others – the Beat Generation was always going to be compromised in its Transcendentalist aim for a democratising form of life and art.

Beat Fatalism Vs. Civil Rights Activism

In Ginsberg and Kerouac's work, that elitism was informed by their fatalistic and eschatological reading. Put on to the cult German historian Oswald Spengler while students in the late 1940s, they formed their vision of a heroic American underclass – of a 'beat' but enlightened black, criminal and bohemian elect – out of Spengler's theory of Western civilizational decline. Western Civilisation was on its way out, Spengler said – limping through its final 'winter' stage of urbanism, capitalism and spiritual defunctness – but it would be survived by a small class of 'historyless', 'cultureless' and enduring peasant types, called the 'fellaheen'. That term and that anti-heroic subplot fascinated the Beats, helping them conceptualise America as a disaster zone and themselves and their allies as in line to be saved.[42]

If Ginsberg alluded to the 'fellaheen' in his work – and weaved it here and there into his Blake-inspired theory that he could see what others could not – for Kerouac, Spengler's images merged with the biblical images of his childhood to generate a deep longing for dissolution and release. When Kerouac objected to Kesey's hippie communalism, he aimed to preserve a purity of vision that read human existence as paltry and pre-determined in a grander, mesmerizingly divine scheme. For the devoutly Catholic, and Spengler-captivated Kerouac, 'beat' as he had originally meant it entailed awe at the knowledge of individual and collective insignificance.

This has interesting implications for the politics of identity that emerged afterwards. If he had resented respectable bourgeois social codes, and aimed to escape them in his own thinking, lifestyle and art, he also viewed his rebellion and the larger Beat re-spiritualizing mission as a romantically personal affair. He longs consistently in his work for a world more compassionate and humane – more in line with the beatitudes of Christ that he read as a Catholic child growing up in Massachusetts. In fact, that desire constitutes the main poetic force of Kerouac's writing – melancholia at the sufferings of human beings in the material world and desire for their alleviation in eternity.

As with much Catholic thought on redemption, that desire provides pleasure by the concomitant knowledge that it cannot be satisfied on earth. For Kerouac, the individual alone is able to achieve moments of relief, of spiritual enlightenment, but the same relief will not extend to the human collective. Thus he doubted any attempt to delineate the causes of suffering on earth, and to organize for its solution. Invited by politically radical students to speak at Hunter College in 1958 he got up (drunk again) and ribbed them for their delusions: 'So you're all smart know-it-all Marxists and Freudians, hey? … why don't you come back in a million years and tell me all about it, angels? … Who knows, my God, but that the universe is not one vast sea of compassion actually, the veritable holy honey, beneath all this show of personality and cruelty'.[43]

Kerouac's skepticism, his masochism and martyrdom – though all in fact tenderly meant and expressed, and the last two sources of great beauty in his art – were the antitheses of the Christian personalist philosophy which Martin Luther King practiced; and in service of a group who had far greater cause to dwell on their suffering. The origin of Kerouac's thinking was an equivalent of King's humility before the unfathomable nature of the divine – and in this respect it escapes the narcissisms of many in the hippie movement that followed him – but the end political result was self-indulgence and self-immolation rather than active work for change.

In King's mission lay a deep, genuine concern for the dignity of all sides ensnared by 'the giant triplets of racism, materialism and militarism' – from blacks who endured segregation to whites who enforced it, from the poor who suffered material social injustice to the rich who appeared to benefit from it, and from the foreign victims of American bombs to the average US citizen complicit in their evil.[44] Rather than tragic, beatific Christ-like contemplation of these evils – or the beautiful, peaceful world God may reveal in the next life – the point of King's African-American challenge to the consensus was progress beyond them in the here and now.

Conclusion

Such nobly practical thinking from a position of legal subjugation puts Beat, privileged idealism to shame, and may offer a way of untangling the knots leftist and

liberal activism seems to have tied itself up in in 2020. What we see today among many young activists is the attitudinal net result both of the romantic Beat desire to 'cultivate of [their own] marginality' by reflection in others' repression, and of late 60s born outrage at the personal expression of systemic sin. If 'good' has, as Gitlin put it, become 'crowned by victimhood', some of the pop cultural roots of this lie first in a late fifties youth movement that celebrated oppressed individuals not as complicated human beings worthy of as fair treatment as anyone else, but as beatific or anti-heroic saints in an abstract parable.[45] If that crowning of the victim must now be matched by the demeaning of the perpetrator, the roots lie in the next stage of countercultural radicalism, in which the pure can only remain so if original sin is continually rooted out and its expressers condemned.

As we've seen, the heretical art and lifestyle of the 'beat' writers in the 1950s had a significant impact on a wider shift towards making the personal political – bringing individual identity to the fore in public considerations of how a society was to be organised. By challenging convention then, they and other heretics contributed to a template of cultural rebellion that pushed ideas about personal spiritual development, the free expression of sexual desire, and the breaking down of borders between people of different races within America and human beings across the planet. Their influence on the politics of identity we know today is both evidenced and complicated by the fact that versions of their originally shocking ideas had become so commonplace by the 1990s that all three of their main figureheads wound up on posters for global fashion chains.

Beyond this commercialisation of countercultural rebellion – which was signposted by the movement's coincidence with the rise of mass culture in the 1960s – a deeper consideration of the Beats and their descendants has shed light on some possible reasons why the ideas they disseminated are being contested today. In the first place, their movement for freedom from the tyranny of convention changed its stripes once it became the convention itself. From the late 1960s to the present day – and in response to necessary interventions from gender and race political offshoots – the progressive "countercultural" perspective has entailed continual inspection of the self for the error of prejudice. The Beats' inner quest for authenticity, and for freedom from moral benchmarks evolved into an inner quest for pure moral intention. In the

second place – and pre-emptive of that move towards the examination of the soul – they were always compromised in their democratic vision by a fatalistic, spiritual elitism about who was worthy of being saved.

It is perhaps unsurprising that the Beats' self-proclaimed American Renaissance held to this logic of salvation. Motivated by the desire to recapture a lost American ideal, Beat reformers carried over the 'chosen people' narrative that had driven and compromised that ideal from the start. They were, as a half-admiring half-teasing Norman Mailer put it, as pious and outlying as 'the early Christians' (Mailer 1969, p. 45).[46] Their 'Idealism', as Kerouac called it, fed on frontier stories that themselves had roots in early settler myths about a chosen people predestined for the Kingdom of Heaven. Perhaps the destructive flipside to that story – of a 'Canaanite' tribe born less clean, and less human – had its paradoxical updated expression in a movement for whom purity was supposed to mean rejection of tribal intolerance. Fast forward to today, and the original sins that half of America wants to be saved from and that the other half is offended to be accused of, are exactly the ugly assumptions about male and white supremacy that made slavery – and in fact the country – possible.

Of course, any system that divides the world into saved and unsaved is potentially brutal – whether Far Right, Marxist, Christian or Islamic. But Martin Luther King's productive example shows that such brutality can be mitigated by compassion for and patience with those who appear to fall into the latter camp. From King, rather than countercultural heroes or political zealots, we get the simple, un-partisan truth that compassion itself constitutes redemption – and that that feeling is accessible by all, irrespective of race, gender, nationality or political persuasion. Our current hybrid of countercultural and unwitting religious logic is founded on a radical humanization of the oppressed and as radical dehumanization of the perceived "fascist" oppressor. This, as Andrew Sullivan has recently pointed out, owes as much to superstitious religious binaries as politics, but is dangerously misunderstood by those who practice it as an Enlightened, reasoned worldview.[47]

Our impasse today – between a new nationalism harnessing frustration at political correctness and left-leaning oppositions protective of it by instinct – may be breached by more careful attention to the energy which drove those racial, gender and sexual

issues to the top of the agenda in the first place. The new countercultural energy *against* protection of the oppressed can be better understood if we appreciate that the original leftist counterculture was itself steeped in elitist rhetoric. All heresy assumes its superior righteousness and authenticity, and that assumption has endured from the 1950s and 60s Counterculture through to the Personal Is Political movement that tried to purify it, and into the rhetoric of those on both sides today. An antidote might be to appreciate that the good served by releasing the individual and collective from hardship and shame is undermined by the accompanying impulse to heap that shame back onto others. Resisting condemnation means acknowledging and keeping a lid on the feeling of exceptional good a 'progressive' worldview affords – and appreciating that the exact same exceptionalism is also firing the opposing heretic whose position you despise.

Notes

[1] Jonathan Haidt, (2017) 'Trump Breaks a Taboo–and Pays the Price', *The Atlantic.* Available at: https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/08/whathappens-when-the-president-commits-sacrilege/537519/ [Accessed 1 June 2020]

[2] For more on those Alt Right kids, and the tactics and traditions they have harnessed, see Angela Nagle (2017). *Kill All Normies: From 4Chan and Tumblr to Trump and the Alt Right.* Zero Books: London. See also Mike Wendling (2018) *Alt Right: From 4chan to the White House*. Pluto Press: London.

[3] Peterson, Shapiro and Dave Rubin have amassed millions of views and followers at their respective Youtube channels (https://www.youtube.com/user/JordanPetersonVideos, https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCaeO5vkdj5xOQHp4UmIN6dw, https://www.youtube.com/user/RubinReport). Candace Owens, who has garnered attention by her association with the rapper Kanye West, counsels young black people to leave the Democrat party for Trump, and to free themselves from the politics of grievance and welfare dependency. Her Blexit organization (black + exit), was launched in 2018 (https://blexitfoundation.org/). These figures reference each other, have interviewed one another, and (excepting Owens) were in 2018 grouped together by the sympathetic *New York Times* journalist Bari Weiss under the label 'The Intellectual Dark Web' ('Opinion: Meet the Renegades of the Intellectual Dark Web'. Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/08/opinion/intellectual-dark-web.html [Accessed 1 June 2020]).

[4] For more on this, see my 'Straw Gods: A Cautious Response to Jordan Peterson', *Los Angeles Review of Books* (2018). Available at: https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/straw-gods-a-cautious-response-to-jordan-peterson/

[5] Todd Gitlin (1987) *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage.* Bantam Books: New York; James J. Farrell (1997). *The Spirit of the Sixties: The Making of Postwar Radicalism.* New York: Routledge.

[6] Farrell, pp. 5-8.
[7] Ibid., p. 22.
[8] Martin Luther King Jr. (1964). 'Martin Luther King Jr.: Acceptance Speech.' *The Nobel Prize.* Available at: https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1964/king/26142-martin-luther-king-jr-acceptance-speech-1964/
[accessed 3 June 2020]
[9] Gitlin, p. 8.
[10] Ibid., p. 35.
[11] Ibid., p. 56.
[12] For a detailed overview of the Beats' reception in popular cultural magazines, see Stephen Petrus (1997) 'Rumblings of Discontent: American Popular and its Response to the Beat Generation, 1957-1960', *Studies in Popular Culture*, 20(1), pp. 1-17.
[13] Walt Whitman (1985). 'Leaves of Grass.' In Kaplin, J. (ed.). *Walt Whitman: Complete Poetry and Collected Prose*. The Library of America: Washingon. Orig. ed.: 1855, pp. 1-147.
[14] Allen Ginsberg (2009). *Collected Poems*. London: Penguin, pp. 134 & 142; Whitman, p. 11.
[15] Ginsberg (2012). 'Introduction.' In *Visions of Cody*. London: Penguin. Orig. ed.: 1972, pp. 1-10, p. 6; Ginsberg, writing to his father Louis in 1957, cited in Anne Charters (ed.), (2001). *Beat Down To Your Soul: What Was The Beat Generation.* New York: Penguin, p. 1.
[16] Ibid., p. 1.
[17] George Plimpton (ed.), (1999). *The Beat Writers at Work*. New York: Random House/Modern Library, pp. 101–02.
[18] For a detailed account of how Ginsberg's 'long line' method functions, see Regina Weinreich (2017).'Locating a Beat Aesthetic.' In Steve Belletto (ed.). *The Cambridge Companion to The Beats*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 51-61.
[19] Plimpton, p. 53; William Blake (1975). *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. xxii. Written 1790-93.
[20] Aldous Huxley (1954). *The Doors of Perception.* London: Chatto & Windus.
[21] David Sterrit (2013). *The Beats: A Very Short Introduction.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 50.
[22] *Collected Poems*, p. 139.
[23] Farrell, p. 52,
[24] Ibid., p. 63.
[25] Ibid., p. 52.
[26] Theodore Roszak (1969). *The Making of a Counterculture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and its Youthful Opposition.* New York: Anchor Books. See also my *Anti-Humanism in the Counterculture.* London: Palgrave Macmillan (due 2020).
[27] As before, see Petrus' 'Rumblings of Discontent: American Popular and its Response to the Beat Generation,1957-1960' for more on the Beats' popular reception.
[28] Journalist Herb Caen came up with the term 'beatnik' to describe Ginsberg and his affiliates in his column for the *San Francisco Chronicle* in 1961. Attracted to but also amused by their 'earnest' bohemian poetry and lifestyles – and spotting an opportunity to draw parallels with other goings on in the Zeitgeist – he fused 'beat' with the word for Russia's Space program, 'Sputnik', to imply their rebellion as a kind of "enemy within".

[29] Ken Kesey (1994). 'Ken Kesey: The Art of Fiction'. In *Paris Review: The Art of Fiction No. 136*. Available at: https://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/1830/ken-kesey-the-art-of-fiction-no-136-ken-kesey. [Accessed on 13 Sep 2017]
[30] Jack Kerouac (2011). *Dharma Bums*. New York: Penguin. Orig. ed.: 1958, p. 21.
[31] Karl Shapiro (1971). 'The Greatest Living Author: In Defense of Ignorance.' In Mitchell, E.B. (ed.) *Henry Miller: Three Decades of Criticism*. New York: New York University Press, 1971, pp. 77-84, p. 75.
[32] Quoted in Ann Charters (2011). 'Introduction.' In *On The Road*. London: Penguin. Orig. ed.: 1957, p. xviii.
[33] Farrell, p. 70.
[34] Ibid., p. 70.
[35] Bob Dylan. 'The Times They Are a-Changin'', *The Times They Are a-Changin'.* Columbia: New York, 1963.
[36] Kate Millett (1969). *Sexual Politics*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press; Barbara Ehrenreich (1983). *The Hearts of Men: American Dream and the Flight from Commitment.* New York: Anchor Books.
[37] For the detail of Mailer's accusation, see his *Prisoner of Sex* (1971) and his subsequent speaking performance in *Town Bloody Hall* (1971). The first is his print response to being called out by Millett in her *Sexual Politics* (1969); the second his contribution, as panel chair, to a debate with other Second Wave Feminists, including Germaine Greer.
[38] That 'philosophy of hip' is expressed in Mailer's 1957 essay *The White Negro* (San Francisco: City Lights Books), discussed shortly.
[39] Gitlin, p. 8.
[40] Ibid., pp. 77 & 76.
[41] Ibid., p. 78.
[42] For more on Spengler's influence on the Beat Generation, see my own *Anti-Humanism in the Counterculture* (2020), John Lardas' *Bob Apocalypse* (2001) and Robert Inchausti's *Hard to Be a Saint in the City* (2017).
[43] Gitlin, p. 60.
[44] King, 'Martin Luther King Jr.: Acceptance Speech', np.
[45] Gitlin, p. 8. See my p. 19.
[46] Norman Mailer (1967). 'In the Red Light: A History of the Republican Convention in 1964'. In *Cannibals and Christians*. London: Sphere Books, pp. 15-65. Orig. ed.: 1967, p. 45.
[47] Andrew Sullivan (2018). 'America's New Religions.' In *New York Magazine.* Available at: https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2018/12/andrew-sullivan-americas-new-religions.html [accessed 18 March 2020], np.