OSCAR SKOWRONEK
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH, M.A. THESIS

A FORMALIST APPROACH TO ALLEN GINSBERG: AN ABSTRACT

This paper analyses several major poems by Ginsberg. The introduction develops the organising idea of an unfixed line (not stressed and not fixed in syllable) through a discussion of blank verse in the mature Shakespeare and Webster. It names prose as the ground of Ginsberg's experiments. Chapter I, stressing "Howl"'s oral character, compares its structure and vocal characteristics to Whitman's catalog line. It sees the "Howl" line as a dialectic between breath and grammar, observes another form of the dialectic in "At Apollinaire's Grave," and considers modes of grammatical organisation in "Death to Van Gogh's Ear!". Chapter II traces Ginsberg's short-line poems through prose confessionalism to imagism to a complex imagistic confessionalism, citing the influence of Williams. Chapter III considers "Kaddish" as a "poem of becoming," apprehending the open form of its line as an effort to bring the time dimension into the poem.

A FORMALIST APPROACH TO ALLEN GINSBERG

OSCAR SKOWRONEK

A FORMALIST APPROACH TO ALLEN GINSBERG

BY

OSCAR SKOWRONEK

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Master of Arts
in the Department of English
McGill University
July, 1970

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

This paper sketches ways and means of discussing Allen Ginsberg in formal terms. Formalist critics to date have ignored Ginsberg. Most critics that have bothered to consider him have handled his poetry as some sort of sociological phenomenon, as language that is essentially formless.[1] Two things, I suggest,contribute to this view: 1. prejudice against the youth culture that has embraced Ginsberg, 2. the lack of a vocabulary to describe Ginsberg's poetic forms. The first is not a legitimate critical problem and I am going to ignore it. The second problem is real, and forms the topic of my paper.

This paper assumes and tries to confirm that Ginsberg's poetry has form. It is not an attempt to crack Ginsberg's system, to produce the formula that would effectively reduce each of his poems. There is no Ginsberg system, no one Ginsberg line, but a rich variety of lines, one of which I discuss in each of my three chapters. In this introduction, I try to show the underlying unity of Ginsberg's formal experiments, their concerns and reflexes. First, is a fascination with prose that Ginsberg shares with a broad tradition in modern poetry. Ginsberg has more in common with T.S. Eliot

than either of them would care to admit. Both are concerned with putting some of the solid of prose back into poetry and both come to the problem of the line which cuts right to the heart of the matter.

All poetry, with the exception of the Torah's Hebrew, is built in lines. Why? One theory looks to the origins of poetry in music and dance.[2] The earliest poetry, the theory goes, was set to music and as such had to be synchronised with musical measures. The line measured out words as the bar measured notes. The line's original purpose was to measure time. It kept this function long after poetry separated from song. A poem's movement in time is founded on its line, whether the rule of movement be metric, syllabic, or accentual-syllabic. Metre is given in terms of feet to a line, syllable in terms of syllables to a line, accent in terms of beats per line.

Prose, on the other hand, is not measured in lines. Specialised prose forms like oratory or fiction do control time functionally, but not by means of lines. Insofar as simple prose has a "time," it is unconscious. The "time" of my conversation--its rhythms, its breath units, its pauses and stresses--depends on my language, region, class, and to some extent my personality and mood of the moment. If I come from Georgia, I am likely to drawl; if I am very timid, I may stutter. These are aspects of simple prose time.

Now prose, both Eliot and Ginsberg see, is the solid of good poetry. Prose is the raw material, prose is to the poet what the stone is to the sculptor. And the poet is faced with putting into lines what is naturally lineless, with imposing a poetic time on a prose time. This is the basic contradiction of lined poetry. A stress pattern increases it; fixing lines in length increases it, and the standard English language line is both stressed and fixed. Since Chaucer, English verse has been accentual-syllabic, that is, based on stressed lines of a fixed number of syllables or on stanzas with patterns of fixed lines. This fundamental convention determines the cut of an English verse line. Traditional English language poetry is the compromise between "the language of men" and this basic line. Consider briefly the nature of the compromise. A stress pattern governs rhythmics and simultaneously affects syntax because the two are inseparable. Fixing a line puts syntax into a double clamp. If a line's length varies freely, its pressure on word orders is negligible--the line can vary in accord with syntax, breaking where syntax breaks. Fixing the line cuts this relation by standardising the size of the syntactic unit. This is especially true if the lines are closed against run-ons, that is, if syntactic units are made to correspond strictly to line units. Not all points on a line are equal in value. The end and the beginning, in that order, are the most prominent and word orders must be designed so that key words hold those

places. These objective features make verse language different from prose and give rise to phenomena like poetic syntax.[3] In a fixed line system like the accentual-syllabic, the line, the unit of poetic time and meaning, and not the sentence, the corresponding prose unit, dominates.

Ginsberg's two-pronged attack on the system, against both accent and syllable, is not barbarism but a strategy for reinforcing the prose element in poetry. It has the same sources as Eliot's early experiments with free verse but goes further. Eliot's free verse was merely a stretching of the accentual-syllabic verse whose "murmur" could always be heard "behind the arras."[4] Ginsberg makes a complete break, and looks for ways of building forms with unfixed or free lines.*

A close look at some fixed-line paradigms will focus this emerging perspective. First an extreme case: the closed couplet, the most fixed line in English verse. This couplet seals in the sentence. No sentence can begin in mid-line. Lines must not run-on, each line must close with at least a caesura, and more commonly a punctuation mark. Strong end-rimes, usually masculine, emphasise each line's separateness. Rhetoric is tightly fitted to the architecture of the couplet. In such a structure, the sentence can hardly go its own way.

* The terms free, fixed, and unfixed are categories and imply no value judgments.

It takes the genius of a Pope to channel into it the vigour of speech, through deft use of internal pauses, metric variations, and fresh, sometimes colloquial diction. Lesser poets are easily buried by the heavy artifice of the closed couplet, the easiest verse to write and the hardest to write well.

Samuel Johnson's couplet is a tedious jog-trot. Swift failed in the form and switched to tetrameters which are less demanding.

Racine's alexandrines, a source of the neo-classic couplet, are not interested in compromising with common speech. Racine aims at style, at an abstract geometric language based squarely on the integrity of the line. He does to words what Louis' Versailles did to plants. Each has a pure and special beauty which has little to do with the beauty of prose on the one hand, or of wild flowers on the other. It is the beauty of a theorem in Euclid. Shakespeare is Racine's opposite. His blank verse takes its strength from speech, rhetorically amplified. If Racine is Versailles, Shakespeare is the conditioned wildness of an English country garden.

Shakespeare's blank verse goes through many phases. The early verse comes under the spell of Marlowe, the first to master the form for the stage. It is grandiose, highly rhetorical, and above all, aware of its line. Blank verse

has an early history of strict lining. Surrey invented it for his translation of the Aeneid and end-stopped nearly all his lines. Such practice can, and did in Surrey, lead to tedium. If tricky for an epic, it is positively dangerous for drama. The high declamatory tone induced by the regular measures of a fixed line is appropriate for only a narrow range of speech. Dramatic writing of any breadth demands a more supple line, one that can stretch to accomodate the irregular cadences of the many levels of speech. The fixed line suits Marlowe well; declamation comes naturally to his hubristic kings and aspiring supermen. Tamburlaine is almost completely declamatory, and contains scarcely a run-on line. Shakespeare's Marlovian Richard II or Richard III show the influence:

> Which blood, like sacrificing Abel's, cries,
> Even from the tongueless caverns of the earth,
> To me for justice and rough chastisement;
> And, by the glorious worth of my descent,
> This arm shall do it, or this life be spent.
>
> Richard II, I, i, pp. 104-8.[5]

This extract shows Shakespeare's complete mastery of strong-lined blank verse. Notice how he uses the line to build the thought in clean, hard layers, rising towards a climax in the couplet. Notice how key words like "cries" and "to me" are isolated rhetorically at the strategic ends and beginnings of lines. Notice also the use of internal pauses to isolate and stress phrases like "shall do it" and "like sacrificing Abel's."

But notice also how natural word orders are cut up and spliced together to achieve these effects. Were he speaking prose, Bolingbrooke might have said:

> Which blood cries to me for justice and rough chastisement even from the tongueless caverns of the earth; and this arm shall do it, by the glorious worth of my descent, or this life be spent.

Conversion to a normal noun-verb-object sentence pattern drains the verse of its strength. Restoring the sentence destroys the line, and shows how much the beauty of this type of verse depends on a fixed line.

The mature verse of the tragic phase is something else. In parts of King Lear, the even metres and fixed lines give way to a new, radical breathing:

> Why brand they us
> With base? with baseness? bastardy? base? base?
> Who in the lusty stealth of nature take
> More composition and fierce quality
> Than doth, within a dull, stale, tired bed,
> Go to the creating a whole tribe of fops,
> Got 'tween asleep and wake?
>
> (Lear, I, i, . 9-15)

Here there is new freedom for the sentence. The line has not been cancelled, but it is weaker. The sentence, while not free of metre and syntactic distortion, is carried by speech rhythms and natural word orders. Only three lines are stopped by punctuation, two are run-on, and one takes a caesura that would be missed in an energetic reading. A

single sentence spans lines 11-15, a deep breath interval that is rare in the earlier verse, but common in Lear. The sentence has this new strength because Shakespeare is reaching for the accents of speech, with its uneven breathing and its erratic alternations of long and short bursts of voice. To harness those accents, he has to explode the confines of a regular five-beat, end-stopped line.

Much of what appears as prose in the printed editions of Lear is almost indistinguishable from this passage. The following lines which I have laid out as blank verse are printed as prose in every edition I have consulted, including the first folio.

Iambs

4 These late eclipses in the sun and moon
3 Portend no good to us: Though the wisdom
2 Of nature can reason it thus and thus,
3 Yet nature finds itself scourged by the sequent effects.
2 Love cools, friendship falls off, brothers divide:
3 In cities, mutinies; in countries, discord;
1 In palaces, treason; and the bond cracked
'Twixt son and father

(Lear, I, ii, 115ff.)

As my scansion shows, the iambic undercurrent in these lines is as strong as in the verse passage. In each case there are four to five stresses per line. The extract's expression

is as compact as Shakespeare's normal verse and as strong in rhetorical emphasis. Only one sentence refuses to bend into a ten-syllable line which also proves that this is not a long-standing printer's error. Plainly, the distinctions between verse and prose have become blurred in Lear. Much of the play's best verse is very like a heightened prose and its heightened prose very close to verse. This points to an exciting exchange between verse and prose, to a dialectic between line and sentence.

Blank verse, like all fixed-line verse,can be conceived as such a dialectic. A dialectic implies a conflict, but a conflict need not be destructive. A dialectic becomes destructive when one pole becomes so strong that it negates the other. Closed couplets destroy themselves when the line, which is intrinsically stronger, kills the pulse of the sentence. That is why Pope, as I said, uses all his wits to keep the sentence alive and breathing. Free verse fails when the sentence is allowed to run loose and dissolve into prose. As I will show, such verse needs a principle of order to replace the line in its dialectic with sentence. Shakespeare's blank verse is unique for the full range of its dialectic. In the early verse, line leads sentence. In the tragic phase, the two are equally balanced. Sometimes sentence pushes the pace, sometimes line reasserts itself in returns to the older declamatory style. In Lear, this

see-saw struggle contributes to the almost unbearable passion in the language. The last phase of the dialectic, sentence leading line, is never reached in Shakespeare and has to wait for Webster who, extending Shakespeare's experiments, shrinks and stretches the ten-syllable line to create the first free verse in English.[6]

The history of blank verse is the history of a line; end-stopped in Surrey, dynamically variable in Shakespeare, fluid, almost free in Webster. That it ever became the great dramatic line in the language is a paradox; because it was born mute, in a humanist's language experiment. On the stage, the line learns to speak, adapting itself to an unsurpassed range of vocal utterance, high and low. Everyone will agree that it reaches its zenith in Shakespeare, though Webster pushes it ways that even Shakespeare did not go. In any case, its thrust is away from the fixed line to the sentence, towards the resources of prose, which is the way Ginsberg is going.[7]

The sentence is the ground of all of Ginsberg's poetry. Fixed-line verse is concerned with fitting sentences into lines. Ginsberg's verse begins with sentences; lines are the structures devised to house sentences, to bring out their character. The specific formal problem of every Ginsberg poem is how to structure its kind of sentences, or how to bring its particular prose into lines. Ginsberg works with many prose bases: silent and oral, conversational and

oratorical. His range is implied in his two main influences, (ignoring Blake), Whitman and William Carlos Williams. It is hard to find two lines as different as Whitman's long, elegant line and Williams' spare four-syllable affairs. Yet they are in the same camp. Both lines are committed to prose and both are geared to sentences; Whitman's to the deep-breathing sentences of prophesy, Williams' to sentences of American speech. My first chapter shows Ginsberg involved in lines that are roughly in a Whitman tradition, the second in a Williams tradition, the third in what could become a Ginsberg tradition.

CHAPTER I

"HOWL" AND ITS VARIANTS

"Howl" is Ginsberg's first important long-line poem and because of its clear symmetrical structure the best way into his method. Features common to many of his long lines stand out in relief in "Howl." Before "Howl," Ginsberg was essentially a short-line poet. In "Howl," he grasped how to charge long lines, how to keep them going, and how to hold them together. The "sudden flash" of insight is described at the end of "Howl" I:

> 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 vibrating 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 intelligent and shaking with shame rejected yet confessing out the soul to conform to the rhythm of thought in his naked and endless head,[1]

This is a formalist manifesto, delivered with remarkable economy, precision, and passion. Its slogans can stand as titles to my chapters: "the ellipse the catalog the meter & the vibrating plane," "to recreate the syntax and measure of poor human prose." In fact, these lines effectively cover Ginsberg's method in "Howl." What follows is exposition.

The lines in "Howl" I are powered by sentences that range from 12 to 72 words in length, but fall mostly between 18 and 30 words. With this variability they have a regular structure. Aside from a few lines at the beginning and end and a few scattered in the body, each line has the stem "who--past verb--object or adverbial adjunct & ----." If the verb is transitive it takes an object, if intransitive an adverbial adjunct; if passive, it is followed by a subject. From this stem a sentence can expand in various grammatical patterns to indefinite lengths, the limits being the limits of human breath. Ideally, writes Ginsberg, each line is a single breath-unit.[2] In practice, some lines breathe internally. But as a rule, "Howl"'s breath is very long. "Howl" is an extreme poem. Its lines repeatedly push to the limiting point. Ginsberg's aim in "Howl" is to strain breathing to its breaking point, to find a physiological equivalent in the craving of his voice to the craving in his soul. "Howl"'s lines surge forward like oil under pressure. They take this energy from the radical breathing of their sentences; they can contain it only through their strict grammatical parallelism. "Howl" turns on this breath-grammar axis, which is analogous to the line-sentence dialectic of fixed lines. Breath is an aspect of sentences, grammar a principle of order. Every Ginsberg poem involves both a sentence principle and an order principle, though not necessarily breath and grammar. Breath is simply the salient property of "Howl"'s sentences and grammar "Howl"'s

particular system of order. Other lines seize on other features of sentences and order themselves in non-grammatical ways. But "Howl" depends on both breath and grammar. Without grammatical parallelism "Howl" would fly apart for lack of a ballast. Without free breathing, without the strong pulse of its sentence, it would be pinned to the page by its heavy artifice.

"Howl" has strong connections, both formal and thematic, to Whitman. Like Whitman, Ginsberg is an American prophet. He takes Whitman's stance of seer and witness. He adapts Whitman's catalog technique and most important, his line. Yet "Howl" succeeds precisely because Ginsberg does not write like Whitman. Imitating Whitman is easy, and fatal. The style is too much the man, the man unique, and his world dead. Whitman's America was a virgin, a wilderness dotted with a few pockets of civilisation. Industrialism was just beginning; it was easy to be romantic about machines. Ginsberg's infernal New York was Whitman's "Paumanok," a bustling market-town. In an exact sense, Whitman's long line is an image of his time--broad, confident, expansive, breathing freely and often. It meanders across the page like the loafer Whitman claimed to be. On the whole, it is too frail a vessel for the teeming confession Ginsberg has in mind. He has to rebuild the line of 1855 for his passion of 1955. Here are lines from a Whitman catalog:

The bride unrumples her white dress, the minute hand of the clock moves slowly,
The opium eater reclines with rigid head and just-open'd lips,
The prostitute draggles her shawl, her bonnet bobs on her tipsy and pimpled neck,
The crowd laugh at her blackguard oaths, the men jeer and wink to each other,
(Miserable! I do not laugh at your oaths nor jeer you;)
The president holding a cabinet council is surrounded by the great Secretaries,
On the piazza walk three matrons stately and friendly with twined arms,[3]

Compare with some lines from the "Howl" catalog:

who faded out in vast sordid movies, were shifted in dreams, woke on a sudden Manhattan, and picked themselves up out of basements hungover with heartless Tokay and horrors of Third Avenue iron dreams & stumbled to unemployment 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 steamboat and opium,
who created great suicidal dramas on the apartment cliffbanks 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,

(Howl I, p. 13, 2-7)

First note the similarities. Whitman's lines have the stem ("The"-subject-verb). Like Ginsberg's they are flexible. The verb can take an object (303) or an adverbial phrase (304), the line can be compounded (306) or simple (304), or the subject or the verb or both can be compounded. Monotony is avoided through occasional reversed word orders (308 & 309), and editorial interjections (307). With these variations, the

lines flex over their basic frame.

The differences are harder to pinpoint, but they are felt by the ear. First, Ginsberg's lines are longer and more elastic. Whitman's shortest line in this group has 11 words, his longest 15. The shortest line in the Ginsberg group has 17 words, the longest 32, and lines from 30 to 60 words are not rare in "Howl." But more important, Whitman's lines breathe internally while Ginsberg's are whole breath-units, which joined to their length advantage makes "Howl"'s breath far longer. In this sample, Whitman's mean breath is 6 words; Ginsberg's shortest is 9 words, his longest 32 and his mean around 17. The lungs confirm it. Ginsberg's lines have a driving tempo that is poles apart from Whitman's amble. How is the difference engineered? Ginsberg is using essentially the same techniques of flexing lines, but greatly extending them. For one thing, he adds many more adjuncts to his stem sentence. Where Whitman will settle for one object or one adverbial phrase, Ginsberg will lay on as many as six objects and/or adverbial adjuncts. For another, Whitman prefers to compound his lines, that is, to add another stem, which tends to break lines in two at a strong breath pause. Ginsberg will compound but prefers to pile all his adjuncts on a single "who-stem." Compounding not only snaps the breath-line but also reinforces the parallelism.

Third, the special form of Ginsberg's catalog induces

a sense of movement. All of his who-stems are subordinate sentences to the first sentence--"I saw the best minds . . . ." As well as giving the poem an iron-tightness, this structure effectively forces out the nominative. "Minds" is the only nominative noun in "Howl." Every "who" looks back to "minds," and everything that follows "who" is predicate, a stress which gives "Howl" kinetic thrust. Ginsberg intensifies this verbal bias with his many participles and extended participial phrases:

> incomparable blind streets of shuddering cloud and lightning in the mind leaping toward poles of Canada & Paterson,
> illuminating all the motionless world of Time between,
>
> (Howl I, p. 9)

Fourth, Ginsberg tries to keep each line tense and charged at all points, to make each line a "high-energy construct," in Olson's phrase.[4] This is a problem for such a long line. Long lines, free or fixed, are usually slack; sweetly melodious like Golding's fourteeners or ambling like Whitman's. Tension comes naturally to shorter lines, as Olson who writes in miniature lines, knows. It is easier to keep the tension high in a six-syllable breath-span than across a thirty-two word line. Ginsberg meets the problem with a form of ellipse I call his telegramming method. Telegramming is a way of pruning a line of the weak words that increase its length and snap its tension. A telegram saves breath and adds punch:

--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,

(p. 12)

who jumped in limousines with the Chinaman of Oklahoma on the
impulse of winter midnight streetlight smalltown rain,

(p. 11) (my underlining)

As these examples show, telegramming gives grammar a beating. The second makes no grammatical sense any way you shake it. Is it on the impulse of rain? on the impulse of midnight? of streetlight? What the telegram has done is drain off the essence of some such sentence: "impelled by the feel of midnight rain in the streetlight of a smalltown one winter"--a word group whose many connectives and breath-pauses would effectively cut the tension in the line. By jamming the active words together Ginsberg avoids breathing and creates a hard, compressed image. Telegramming should be used with great care. Excessive use can clot the flow of the sentence, the life-blood of any free-line poem. Like a CN-CP telegram, a verse telegram should be short, clear, unambiguous and should not trip up the tongue. Ginsberg telegrams intelligently in "Howl," but his reckless telegramming drives at least one later poem into the ground.[5]

Fifth, imagery plays a part in the energy-features of lines and a very important part in "Howl." Strong imagery,

writes Ginsberg,"puts iron poetry back into the line," tame imagery slackens it, lets it lapse into "prosaic."[6] "Howl"'s imagery has a surrealistic scope and intensity without a surrealistic obscurity. There is none of the cool, careful naming of the imagists about it. Its metaphors are feverish, unreal, yet piercingly accurate:

> "the crack of doom on the hydrogen jukebox" (p. 10)
> "meat for the Synagogue cast on the pavement" (p. 10)
> "the narcotic tobacco haze of Capitalism" (p. 11)

who coughed on the sixth floor of Harlem crowned with flame under the tubercular sky surrounded by orange crates of theology,

(p. 13)

Yet at this stage, it is better not to concentrate on imagery in "Howl" or elsewhere in Ginsberg. Criticism today is very well equipped for image analysis and poorly equipped for structural analysis of unfixed lines. In coming to Ginsberg, it's tempting to go after what's most accessible. But to do image analysis without a perspective on Ginsberg's forms would distort him. An image doesn't stand by itself but as part of the complex interconnected structure of a poem. It has to be seen in context. Because the same image in Keats has a different value in Ginsberg, Ginsberg's image criticism must follow on his structural criticism.

"At Apollinaire's Grave" is a tribute to one of

Ginsberg's beloved poets. The first and third part describe a visit to Apollinaire's grave; the second part is an imaginative projection into the life and idiom of his pre-war Paris. Ginsberg's highest compliment to Apollinaire is to reincarnate his vers libre line in English--"your Zone with its long crazy line of bullshit about death."[7] The "Zone" line is one of the classics of free verse. It is very pure in its relation of sentence to line: each line is both a separate syntactic unit and a breath-unit. All the same it is another instrument than the "Howl" line. The Howl line is typical for turning on breath and grammar, but extreme in its breath characteristics. For, as I have said, "Howl" is an extreme poem, literally a howl. The Zone line and its variant in "At Apollinaire's Grave" articulate more moderate voices:

I visited Père Lachaise to look for the remains of Apollinaire
the day the U.S. President arrived in France for the grand
conference of heads of state
so let it be the airport at blue Orly a springtime clarity in the
air over Paris
Eisenhower winging in from his American graveyard
and over the froggy graves at Père Lachaise an illusory mist as
thick as marijuana smoke
Peter Orlovsky and I walked softly thru Père Lachaise we both
knew we would die
and so held temporary hands tenderly in a city like miniature
eternity
roads and street signs rocks and hills and names on everybody's
house
looking for the lost address of a notable Frenchman of the Void
to pay our tender crime of homage to his helpless menhir
and lay my temporary American Howl on top of his silent
Calligramme.

(p. 48)

The contrasts to "Howl" are striking even on a first

impression. For "Howl"'s coiled thrust, an ambling nonchalance. There is no fixed base, no incantatory "who." The lines are continuous, falling into a narrative sequence. The tone is conversational, the language close to prose, the syntax natural and uncrowded. One can almost hear an iambic murmur behind the lines. Compare them to their inspiration, the Zone line:

J'ai vu ce matin une jolie rue dont j'ai oublié le nom
Neuve et propre du soleil elle était le clairon
Les directeurs les ouvriers et les belles steno-dactylographes
Du lundi matin au samedi soir quatre fois par jour y passent
Le matin par trois fois la sirène y gemit
Une cloche rageuse y aboie vers midi
Les inscriptions des enseignes et des murailles
Les plaques les avis à la facon des perroquets criallent
J'aime la grâce de cette rue industrielle
Située à Paris entre la rue Aumont Thieville et l'avenue des Ternes[8]

These lines are classic alexandrine couplets except that they are not alexandrines: they are not fixed at twelve syllables each. The Zone line does to French poetry what Webster did to blank verse: it unpegs a classic fixed line. Otherwise Apollinaire follows Racine: the end rimes, the freely shifting caesura, the end-stopping. But his innovation is more radical for the French than for English tradition. While English verse is accentual-syllabic, French verse (French being stressless) is simply syllabic. Springing the line is rank heresy. Apollinaire takes the step because he wants breathing room, air for his sentence. Apollinaire's line, like his genius, is lyric and narrative, rather than dramatic. In

this, as in other things he is closer to Whitman than to Ginsberg. He is less ambitious than Ginsberg and saner. He is more inclined to celebrate than to denounce. Even in war he could find a violent beauty. He is unpolitical, he is not a revolutionary of state or of consciousness. He has Whitman's love and eye for the commonplace and much of Whitman's voice: calm, reflective, conversational. Usually the voice tells a story, always personal, sometimes trivial--a walk through the Jewish quarter, an acrobats' street-show--beckoning hearers with the come-listen-to-my-story of folk balladeers. Ginsberg's attempt to simulate this manner leads him into a new breathing. Howl's long sentence-lines produced what Ginsberg calls "promethean breathing."[9] In "At Apollinaire's Grave" the lungs are never taxed. A single sentence may break into several lines, one large syntactic chunk to a line, which remains the measure of breath. Lines range from ten to twenty words which is closer to normal speech:

I've eaten the blue carrots you sent out of the grave and Van
Gogh's ear and maniac peyote of Artaud
and will walk down the streets of New York in the black cloak of
French poetry
improvising our conversation in Paris at Père Lachaise
and the future poem that takes its inspiration from the light
bleeding into your grave

The breath is shorter than "Howl"'s but rather longer than Apollinaire's. Ginsberg seems constitutionally incapable of reducing his breath reach any further. He writes: "My breath is long--that's the Measure. It probably bugs Williams

now, but it's a natural consequence--my own heightened conversation, not cooler average daily-talk short breath. I get to mouth more madly this way."[10]

Like Apollinaire's verse, Ginsberg's poem has no punctuation, which Apollinaire considered redundant in poetry. A poem should punctuate itself: "La ponctuation n'est pas indispensable en poésie . . . Son rhythme et sa cadence sont là dans ce but, lorsqu'elle est bien conçue par un vrai poète."[11] This is a commitment to speech. Speech has no formal punctuation, no special sounds to indicate commas, semicolons and question marks. Speech is self-punctuating, starting, pausing, and stopping in accordance with sense and breath. Apollinaire trusts the ear to do without the eye. And if he trusts the ear, he must also respect it, pronouncing sentences that an ear can understand and easily sort into parts. Sentences, in other words, that conform to speech syntax and speech breath-patterns. Syntax must be full; the ear needs weak words and connectives in order to stay on top of the sense. Immoderate ellipse can confuse the ear, telegramming is dangerous. Apollinaire, the extract shows, follows these precepts precisely. But Ginsberg is always struggling with his instinct to condense syntax, to harden lines. He never achieves the grace, the naive detail of these Apollinairian lines: "J'aime la grâce de cette rue industrielle/Située a Paris entre la rue Aumont-Thieville et l'avenue des Ternes." Now and then the hard-won, even tone gives way to excited rhythms:

"O solemn stinking deaths-head what've you got to say nothing/ and that's barely an answer," or a line turns to telegram: "issue new series of images oceanic haikus blue taxicabs in Moscow/negro statues of Buddha." These are not really faults. Ginsberg aims to absorb Apollinaire's line into his personal idiom rather than to duplicate it, which would be as senseless as duplicating Whitman.

These cross comparisons of Ginsberg with Whitman and Apollinaire show something of the variety and complexity of unfixed lines. All these lines are oral, and I have compared them on that basis.

So far my treatment has been mainly in terms of breath. Now the focus shifts to the equally vital principle of order. The Howl line and Whitman's catalog line illustrate two basic forms of parallelism: the recurring word or phrase and the recurring sentence pattern, respectively. The recurring word in "Howl" I is "who," in "Howl" II "Moloch," in "Howl" III, the phrase "I'm with you in Rockland," in the "Footnote," "Holy." Whitman's lines repeat a noun-verb-object/adverbial adjunct pattern. "Howl"'s sentence lines are also parallel, but have more licence to expand, contract, and vary. All of the many ways of organising lines grammatically, it seems to me, are variants or blends of these two basic forms. Knowing which to use is part of the craft. There is nothing arbitrary about this business, it is not a matter of any order will do. Grammar

is the free line rhetoric and must be applied functionally. There are such things as the wrong rhetoric in a poem or too much or too little rhetoric. How do we judge the aptness of a poem's grammatical nexus? There are several variables. First, order in grammar counterpoints freedom in breathing. The principles must balance each other, as the strong "who-stem" in "Howl" balances its promethean breathing. Second, grammars create special effects that contribute to a poem's character, like the incantation produced by "Howl"'s "who" and the kinetic energy produced by its exclusive stress on predicate. But Howl's grammar would be useless and destructive in "At Apollinaire's Grave." Useless because the poem doesn't need to anchor its lines which are breathing in safe speech measures. Destructive because a series of parallel clauses would abort its natural tone. Apollinaire typically shuns grammatical rhetoric because its blatant artifice is damaging to his normal voice. A shift in tone, however, will bring on parallelism, as in this turn to declamation in "Zone":

C'est le beau lys que tous nous cultivons
C'est la torche aux cheveux roux que n'éteint pas le vent
C'est le fils pâle et vermeil de la douloureuse mère
C'est l'arbre toujours touffu de toutes les prières

(Zone, 33-36)

The Zone line is structured by the remnants of the racinian apparatus. "Zone" and "At Apollinaire's Grave" also have a natural narrative structure. Each poet describes

a situation that he witnessed and the sequence of lines follows the sequence of his perceptions. This situational unity makes a unity based on grammar expendable.

More typical than the situational poem is the poem of statement like "Death to Van Gogh's Ear!",[12] inferior by Ginsberg's standards but a mine for methods of grammatical organisation. The poem consists completely in statements. There is no situation, no sense of the poet's body, no physical time and place. There is only a disembodied voice crying prophesy to America. This prophesy is not especially inspired. It has none of the classic grandeur of "Howl." The voice is ironic, weary and self-parodying: "and I rarely have an egg for breakfast tho my work requires infinite eggs to come to birth in Eternity." (p. 60) It doesn't thunder in promethean measures, but jabs with cutting slogans in aphoristic spurts. It has no intrinsic momentum, neither "Howl"'s passion nor the "Grave"'s narrative push. It has to recharge its inspiration at each line, at every slogan. The net effect is somewhat jerky. A main function of the grammatical rhetoric is to smooth over the jerkiness, to paste lines together.

Sentence parallelism yokes together four poets butchered by politics:

Franco has murdered Lorca the fairy son of Whitman
just as Mayakovsky committed suicide to avoid Russia
Hart Crane distinguished Platonist committed suicide to cave in
the wrong America
just as millions of tons of human wheat were burned in secret
caverns under the White House.

(Kaddish, p. 61)

Another sentence parallelism wittily links three saints persecuted by America:

Einstein alive was mocked for his heavenly politics
Bertrand Russell was driven from New York for getting laid
and the immortal Chaplin has been driven from our shores with
the rose in his teeth.

(p. 62)

A repeated sentence stem invokes the dooms of prophets on their governments:

they exist in the death of the Russian and American governments
they exist in the death of Hart Crane and Mayakovsky

(p. 63)

The other general type of grammatic nexus--the recurring word or phrase--appears in several variations. As the subject of several sentences:

Hollywood will rot on the windmills of Eternity
Hollywood whose movies stick in the throat of God
Yes Hollywood will get what it deserves

(p. 63)

Or scattered in successive lines as the object of a preposition, a predicate, a predicate noun, a predicate-adjective and a

subject-adjective:

no more propaganda for monsters
and poets should stay out of politics or become monsters
I have become monsterous with politics
the Russian poet undoubtedly monsterous in his secret notebooks

(p. 64)

These words take on almost primitive qualities through repetition. The phrase "for the sake of" beats out an assault on American greed:

Puerto Ricans crowded for massacre on 114th St. for the sake of an imitation Chinese-Moderne refrigerator
Elephants of mercy murdered for the sake of an Elizabethan birdcage
millions of agitated fanatics in the bughouse for the sake of the screaming soprano of industry

(pp. 64-65)

Every device named here can be found in Whitman the master of grammatical rhetoric in long lines. Two in particular are especially Whitmanian: (a) repeating one verb several times with various nouns:

but I walk, I walk and the Orient walks with me, and all Africa walks
and sooner or later America will walk.

(pp. 61-62)

Compare Whitman:

The city sleeps and the country sleeps,
The living sleep for their time, the dead sleep for their time,
The old husband sleeps by his wife and the young husband sleeps by his wife;

(Song of Myself, sec. 15)

Ginsberg combines this device with (b) another Whitmanian regular, the declaiming "I":

I am the defense early warning system
I see nothing but bombs
I am not interested in preventing Asia from being Asia
and the governments of Russia and Asia will rise and fall but
Asia and Russia will not fall
the government of America also will fall but how can America
fall.

(p. 62)

This first device builds a strong charge on the recurring verb, giving it remarkable qualities. Whitman's "sleep" throws a deep hush over the lines; Ginsberg's "walk" creates a vision of oppressed worlds on the march, his "fall" a vision of political apocalypse.

CHAPTER II

SHORT-LINE FORMS

Any formalist study of Ginsberg stands or falls on his long lines. But Ginsberg was 31 before he wrote "Howl." Behind him was over a decade of experiment and growth in short-line verse. Empty Mirror (1952) contained two long-line poems, but they were a blind start and were not followed up. Ginsberg chose instead to concentrate on unfixed short-lines and after a slow beginning, was writing highly-crafted verse by 1954. A close look at those short lines is valuable not only in its own right but also for a rounded view of Ginsberg's formal problem.

From the beginning, prose is the keynote. Ginsberg is under the influence of W.C. Williams, his friend and neighbour in Paterson, and the leader of the prose tradition in modern American poetry. Williams introduced Ginsberg's first book, Empty Mirror.[1] He presents Ginsberg as one of his own boys, determined to write tough, hard poetry in an authentic American idiom. Such a poetry, Williams thought, had to seek out new directions. The old poetic had nothing to say to it. The old British forms had played themselves out. New lines were needed, lines that are sensitive to the tones and textures of living American speech. The way, Williams thought, lies in

the radical swing into prose, which Ginsberg is making in 1948. Young Ginsberg describes the way he writes:

> When I sit before a paper
> writing my mind turns
> in a kind of feminine
> madness of chatter
> . . . . . .
> I wait: wait till the sky
> appears as it is,
> wait for a moment when
> the poem itself
> is my way of speaking out, not
> declaiming or celebrating yet
> but telling the truth.
>
> ("After All, What Else is There to Say", Empty Mirror, p. 11)

This is Ginsberg's early poetic testament. He wants to tell it like it is, to have the "poem" come without forcing. He wants to keep his transforming imagination in check, his language close to speech. He doesn't want to take over his material, to express, impress, or surrealise. He doesn't want to or can't convert his experience to any vision, hope, or ideology. He can only humbly transcribe what forces itself upon him as true. An epigram at the head of an untitled poem sums up the mood: "The road to a true philosophy of life seems to lie in humbly recording diverse readings of its phenomena."[2] The author? Thos. Hardy, an unlikely muse for a future prophet of the new consciousness.

Empty Mirror shocks anyone who knows the later Ginsberg. It is not the despair that shocks because "Howl" and "Kaddish" are fraught with despair. It is the tone that

is strange; so dry, cold, and hollow. The difference between the hells of "Howl" and Empty Mirror is the difference between fire and ice. "Howl" throbs with imagery; Empty Mirror seems deliberately emptied out of it, the language stripped of colour and made as spare and lean as possible:

> I feel as if I am at a dead
> end and so I am finished.
> All spiritual facts I realise
> are true but I never escape
> the feeling of being closed in
> and the sordidness of self,
> the futility of all that I
> have seen and done and said.
> Maybe if I continue things
> would please me more but now
> I have no hope and I am tired.
>
> (Untitled, Empty Mirror, p. 7)

No telegramming, no figures, no metaphor, nothing of the poetic. Williams called it prose, and these poems are certainly as anti-poetic as anything in Williams. "Poetic" is a dirty word to the young Ginsberg, almost a way of saying phony. Even the imagination is suspect. In Empty Mirror the imagination has to come through the back door, via a group of dream poems that run beside the prose confessions. Each dream is explicitly labelled as such. It is almost as if Ginsberg is saying, "pardon my imagination, but this is only a dream." The reflex is oddly medieval. Like a medieval poet, young Ginsberg mistrusts imagination because imagination is philosophically unsound and his poetry is an adjunct of philosophy or "truth." Therefore like a medieval, he surrounds

imagination in a dream convention. The early Ginsberg is an extreme realist in his prose poems and an allegorist in his dreams. The schism is psychological as well as aesthetic:

> my dreamworld and realworld
> become more and more
> distinct and apart
> . . . . . .
> no active life
> in realworld.
>
> (from "A Meaningless Institution (Dream)" 1948, E.M. p. 11)

For the poet and for the man, the outlook is dismal. His prose poems have an agonising honesty but not much else. The poetry is in danger of being strangled by an almost religious commitment to the naked prose sentence. It is too blunt, without subtlety or richness. Fortunately he doesn't quit writing and put a bullet in his brain. His verse begins to open up. Without abandoning the prose sentence, he begins to explore the possibilities of the image. In "Marijuana Notations" three stanzas of prose rise gracefully to a delicately imagistic conclusion:

> It is December
> almost, they are singing
> Christmas carols
> in front of the department
> stores down the block on
> Fourteenth Street.
>
> (Empty Mirror, p. 15)

Soon he is writing full-fledged imagism:

The alleys, the dye works
Mill Street in the smoke
melancholy in the bars
the sadness of long highways,
negroes climbing around
the rusted iron by the river,
the bathing pool hidden
behind the silk factory
fed by its drainage pipes,
all the pictures we carry in our mind.

(from "A Poem of America",
Empty Mirror, p. 30)

The imagery is cautious, low-key. Ginsberg is careful not to distort the objects of his perceptions with his subjectivity. He does not want to transfigure his images, to turn them into symbols. He does not smelt down perceptions in his mind, filter them through his unconscious, and then reconstitute them as tokens of his psyche. His imagising, in the best imagist tradition, is a way of confronting the external world, not as in surrealism, a mode of self-expression.

The move toward imagism joins a move towards a more oblique, contracted prose. In the first phase,Ginsberg typically used whole prose sentences of the type "I-verb-object": "I suddenly realized that my head/is severed from my body;/I realized it a few nights ago/by myself/lying sleepless on the couch." (Empty Mirror, p. 8). This first poetry is a poetry of "I"-centred statement. The new imagism contains both less "I" and less statement. It represents a shift in orientation: from the self towards the world, from

introspection to perception, from subject to object.[3] The "I" and often the verb drop away to leave only the "object"--the image outside the poet. The sentence, the complete statement of the grammarians, gives way to the fragment. In "A Poem of America," for instance, the images are grammatically all object phrases. This new linguistic compactness rubs off on verse that is not imagistic, like the mildly elliptic conclusion to "A Poem of America":

> Images of the Thirties
> depression and class consciousness
> transfigured above politics
> filled with fire
> with the appearance of God.
>
> (Empty Mirror, p. 30)

"My Alba" is a superb example of the use of the condensed sentence in a non-imagistic poem:

> Now that I've wasted
> five years in Manhattan
> life decaying
> talent a blank
>
> talking disconnected
> patient and mental
> sliderule and number
> machine on a desk
>
> autographed triplicate
> synopsis and taxes
> obedient prompt
> poorly paid[4]

The poem starts with a relaxed prose sentence, which quickly condenses into tight, cryptic fragments related in

sense but not necessarily in grammar. The third to sixth lines stand in grammatical apposition to the "I" of the first line but the seventh to tenth lines relate not appositively, but as images of the "I"'s condition. The technique, outwardly so different, is similar to "Howl"'s. In each case an explicit lead line serves as the nexus for a sequence of lines, introduces an "I", defines a situation, threads the lines together, and permits an economy of utterance.

Like most poems in the imagist phase, "My Alba," is a direct verbalisation of thought. It is silent, conceived in and for the silence of private consciousness and not for a voice to make that consciousness spoken. Its rhythms are thought rhythms, founded on the oblique, fragmentary movement of ideas in a thinking head. We don't think the way we speak. Speech brings our thoughts to others, in sentences, in the common language of grammar. But our silent talking to ourselves is elliptic. We think in disjointed series of code words, phrases, and remembered sensations. We cut across the designed circuits. "My Alba" simulates this peculiar mental dance--most brilliantly in its last stanza. The earlier stanzas move to a fairly regular rhythm induced by breath and phrasal breaks at the end of each line. This evokes the tense, but even, tone of the mind contemplating its fate in the pre-dawn silence. The first light in the window and the hammering of the alarm clock shatter that even-ness. They announce the return of

the office, the typewriter, the market, and the new loss of self. The terror of this instant is heard in the dramatic quickening and sudden irregularity in the rhythm, beating like a frightened heart:

> dawn breaks // its only the sun //
> the East smokes // O my bedroom //
> I am damned to Hell // what //
> alarmclock is ringing
>
> (Reality Sandwiches, p. 8)

In "My Alba" Ginsberg clearly knows what he is doing with his line. In the pre-imagist phase he did not. The one thing sure in the juvenile Ginsberg is his loyalty to the prose sentence and his hostility to anything "poetic" that gets in its way. Thus he rejects the fixed line and lets his sentence run freely from margin to margin. If any of these lines measure breath-units or divide up syntax, it is accidental. Ginsberg's early lining is irrational. His line is completely negative, unfixed but nothing else. In his imagism Ginsberg learns to use lines positively: "By 1955 I wrote poetry adapted from prose seeds and journals, scratchings arranged by phrasing or breath groups into little short-line patterns according to ideas of American speech I'd picked up from W.C. Williams' imagist preoccupations."[5] The short unfixed line then is a measure of sense and breath. In "My Alba," short lines frame each thought fragment, and plot thought rhythms through breathing and phrasing. In more

imagistic poems, like "Sakyamuni Coming Out From the Mountain," each line is like a frame on a continuous strip of film.

> He drags his bare feet
> out of a cave
> under a tree,
> eyebrows
> grown long with weeping
> and hooknosed woe,
> in ragged soft robes
> wearing a fine beard
> unhappy hands
>
> (Reality Sandwiches, p. 9)

As in the long-lines, the sentence is primary. But unlike the later verse, the early verse--prose confessions as well as imagism--is not especially oral. "Sakyamuni," like Wordsworth's "Prelude" can be read out loud, but is no more oral than the "Prelude." Radically oral poetry like "Howl" is constructed with voice in mind and needs voice to come to life. Sound is its motive energy. Unlike "Howl," "Sakyamuni" can get along without lung power. At best the short-line verse produces the "cooler average daily-talk short-breath"[6] that Ginsberg says he put behind him in "Howl." Generally the short-lines explore the rhythms of speechless consciousness or order imagistic perceptions. The high point in the period is "Siesta in Xbalba"[7] (1954, pronounced Chivalva). "Siesta" is a very complex statement about an artist's search for identity among the Aztec ruins of Mexico. It is essentially a more intricate "My Alba," an attempt to print in words the

inner workings of a mind, to anatomise a consciousness. Technically, Ginsberg calls on all that he has learned. The basic stuff is imagism, but there are traces of his prose poetry and early signs of his oratorical voice and posture.

Ginsberg's most impressive achievement in this poem is his handling of a shifting point-of-view. His usual point-of-view is direct address. But in "Siesta", language comes from all angles, from the poet speaking directly, thinking out loud, or thinking in silence, from different levels of the poet's mind, and from other voices. The opening lines throw out cryptic fragments; we have no clue of their source until the eighth line: "let the mind fall down" (Reality Sandwiches, p. 21). Apparently we have been tuning in on somebody's mind. Abruptly style and tone changes and we hear a stream of prose. An "I" reading "prose" in a hammock somewhere announces himself. After a line break, three lines comment on the "madman" in the hammock. A switch back to the "I", another switch to fragments of a banal conversation, and a further switch to a column of verse laid out in short, un-indented lines. The effect is very like rapidly turning a radio dial. But gradually it appears that all this language has a common source in the thought, memory, and speech of the "I", that the poem is a spliced tape of the workings of his mind. Changes in language record changes in his mental

activity. When he thinks to himself, the language is opaque, disconnected, (1-7); when the talk is light, social and flippant, it turns to prose (9-17); his memories of other people's conversation are piped in directly. The qualitative changes in the language are noticed in sense, diction, and grammar; but throughout the poem, the line is the measure, dividing sentences syntactically, modulating rhythms, framing images.

Here are lines spacing out imagery:

> floors under roofcomb of branch,
> foundation to ornament
> tumbled to the flowers
> pyramids and stairways
> raced with vine,
> limestone corbels
> down in the river of trees,
> pillars and corridors
> sunken under the flood of years:
>
> (Reality Sandwiches, p. 28)

The lines expand and contract with the sentence parts to slow and quicken rhythm. Rhythmic changes are important guides to feeling as in the following example:

> Time's slow wall overtopping
> all that firmament of mind,
> as if a shining waterfall of leaves and rain
> were built down solid from the endless sky
> through which no thought can pass.
>
> A great red fat rooster
> mounted on a tree stump
> in the green afternoon,

the ego of the very fields,
screams in the holy sunlight!

(Reality Sandwiches, p. 28)

The ruins have overwhelmed the poet with a sense of timelessness. The lines lengthen, the breath stretches to slow the rhythm and convey a feeling of arrested awe (first five lines). Suddenly, the cry of a rooster breaks the stillness, and time beats again. The shortened lines reduce the breath-units and the absence of indentations reduces the breath pauses to create a syncopated rhythm.

In a vision of "embarcation" at poem's end, Ginsberg evokes Whitman's "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" both in theme and rhythm:

So I dream nightly of an embarcation,
captains, captains,
iron passageways, cabin lights,
Brooklyn across the waters,
the great dull boat, visitors, farewells,
the blurred vast sea--
one trip a lifetime's loss or gain:

(Reality Sandwiches, p. 31)

Extra syllables and many comma pauses extend the line to simulate Whitman's unhurried breathing. He reverses his field at the very end, trimming his line, drawing in his margins and holding his breath for a blunt warning to America:

There is a god
dying in America
already created
in the imagination of men
made palpable
for adoration:
there is an inner
anterior image
of divinity
beckoning me out
to pilgrimage.

(Reality Sandwiches, p. 33)

Ginsberg's development traces a wide trajectory from confessionalism to confessionalism. In retrospect, the first poems look like a false start in confessionalism, an attempt to pass off diary jottings as poetry. The imagism is a temporary withdrawal from this confessionalism that was going nowhere fast, a step sideways from the empty mirror and the obsession with self. Imagism was the academy that made Ginsberg into a poet, taught him breath, rhythm, image, and line. "Siesta at Xbalba" finds him exploring the limits of imagism, looking for a way to express his deepest, most terrible truths. Deep-gut confessionalism is something the imagist does not usually try. Imagism is a mode of perception; as I said earlier, imagism is objective. It can certainly refract light back from objects of perception to their perceiver (as in Ginsberg's "Havana 1953") but can seldom evoke more than a passing mood or condition. Ginsberg was not satisfied with mood poems. His special passion is the

long confession, brimming with all his horror, his fantasy, his joy. "Howl"'s pulse can already be heard in these lines with their heightened imagery, their parallelism, their ellipse, their fever:

> Toward what city
> will I travel? What wild houses
> do I go to occupy?
> What vagrant rooms and streets
> and lights in the long night
> urge my expectation? What genius
> of sensation in ancient
> halls? what jazz beyond jazz
> in future blue saloons?
> what love in the cafes of God?

(Reality Sandwiches, p. 32)

In the next chapter I consider a confessional poem that follows "Howl" yet looks back at the confessionalism of the early poems.

CHAPTER III

KADDISH: THE NARRATIVE LINE

"Kaddish," Ginsberg's last major poem of the fifties, is also the hardest to treat in formal terms. For one thing, it does not have any recognisable antecedents. The earlier Ginsberg grows out of various traditions--Empty Mirror from imagism and W.C. Williams, "Howl" from Whitman, "At Apollinaire's Grave" from French vers libre. "Kaddish" alone has no generic name; "Kaddish" is its own genus.

Still "Kaddish" does not come out of a vacuum. Resemblances to the prose confessionals and the long-line poems, the two main strands discussed in chapters I and II, are obvious. "Kaddish"'s line is long, its language is prosy, and its content is confessional. But this only walks around the "Kaddish" problem. Just as water is not the sum of hydrogen and oxygen, but something quite other than either, the Kaddish synthesis is more than the sum of its parts. Before we can phrase the formal problem in Kaddish, we have to understand what type of poem it is, by the useful rule "form is never more than an extension of content."[1] "Kaddish," in my view, is a classic example of what has been

called a poem of becoming. Geoffrey Dutton coins the term in his perceptive study of Whitman, to characterise a special quality of Whitman's poetry.[2] A poem of becoming is what it implies, a poem in the process of becoming a poem. This means that a poem of becoming is radically involved in time, that it has the contingent quality of an event, and not the timeless quality of an object. For a poem of becoming <u>is</u> the event of a poet making a poem. Unlike other poetry, the poetry of becoming does not separate out the process of making a poem from the result. A poem by Wordsworth, for example, is the result of a process of articulating some content. We see only the content, just as when we look at a sculpture we see only an end-product and nothing of the adventure of the artist at each stage in his work. What we see is truly timeless. What is time-bound, the process, is lost forever to the private memory of the artist. The "poem of being" is very like plastic art. When Allen Tate compared the well-made poem to a wood cabinet,[3] he was describing well one type of poetry, but not the poetry of becoming. The poem of becoming makes process public, makes the poet's time part of the aesthetic experience. The poem of becoming preserves the unity of the process and the content. In "Kaddish" for instance, the content seems to be the history of Naomi. But "Kaddish" offers not only the history of Naomi but also the process of Ginsberg carving the history out of his memory, suffering

over it and ultimately rejoicing in it. "Kaddish" therefore is an event, volatile, developing, indeterminate. It is characterised by surprise, by radical turnings in style, tone and feeling. It is shot through with the quality of spontaneity and has all the crudeness of events in time.

Whitman's poetry is the quintessential poetry of becoming. His poetry is process from any point of view. His one book was a book forever in process, continually revised, added to, subtracted from,until the year of his death. For Whitman boldly identified his book with his person--"who touches this touches a man"--and conceived of it as the record of his becoming, of his life. In Whitman, "becoming" is a metaphysical concept, the first law of things. Becoming is the central motif in his work; the journey poem is his typical genre. The titles of his poems abound in beginnings, departures: "Beginning My Studies," "Beginners," "The Ship Starting," "Starting from Paumanok," "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," "Passage to India," "Song of the Open Road." "Song of My Self" is a poem about a man discovering his self. It begins:

I now thirty-seven years old in perfect health begin,
Hoping to cease not till death.

Ginsberg's narrative, which is about a man discovering his mother begins:

Strange now to think of you, gone without corsets & eyes, while
I walk on the sunny pavement of Greenwich Village.
downtown Manhattan, clear winter noon, and I've been up
all night, talking, talking, reading the Kaddish aloud,
listening to Ray Charles blues shout blind on the
phonograph[4]

Note how firmly both poets plant themselves in their poems. Each begins in a here and now. Here I am at the beginning of my journey, says Whitman. And Ginsberg says, here I am coming back to you, Naomi. From the outset, these are personal dramas of becoming. The formal problem in "Kaddish" can now be posed: what forms does language take in "Kaddish" to express its time-charged content? How does Ginsberg's line answer the reality of his memory in process? With this sighting in mind, we can take up our descriptive analysis.

The texture and idiom of "Kaddish" is prose. Not the lucid diary prose of Empty Mirror but a disjointed prose true to the nature of remembering:

A. Picking her tooth with her nail, lips formed an O, suspicion--thought's old worn vagina--absent sideglance of eye--some evil debt written in the wall, unpaid--& the aged breasts of Newark come near--

(Kaddish, p. 21)

A little bit of editing smoothes this line into a stream of prose worthy of a novelist of "remembrance of time past":

B. She picked her tooth with her nail. Suspicious, she formed an O in her lips--thought's old worn vagina. Her eye glanced absently to the side. Perhaps she saw some evil

> unpaid debt written in the wall. And the aged breasts of Newark came near.

A and B give the same information, but produce sharply different impressions. A is a condensed version of B, B without the connectives, without the grammatical correctness and symmetry. B is a specimen of "school prose," prose that respects the grammatical conventions and consists of sentences that are complete and ordered thoughts. A consists not of sentences, but of skeletons of sentences strung together by hyphens. School prose aims at clarity, Kaddish prose at intensity and verisimilitude.

Ginsberg is trying to write the way we remember, to put down the images the way the mind first articulates them to itself in words. A little bit of introspection confirms this. School prose, on the other hand, stands at one remove from the event of verbalising memories and hence at two removes from the original experience. School prose is the medium one uses in communicating private thoughts to others. For the sake of intelligibility one orders one's thoughts, uses connectives and speaks in the common language of grammar. One stands at a point slightly above the process, not at the point of remembrance, but at the point of reflection on remembrance. Ginsberg's Kaddish prose tries to forge these two points into one, to make the instant of annotation simultaneous with the instant of remembrance, and thus bring us closer to whatever is remembered. This is the

real meaning of spontaneity to Ginsberg. Spontaneity to Ginsberg is not the naive, romantic notion that what gushes is good. Spontaneity is a strategy for charging poetry with the qualities of time, for blowing off the thick crust of reflection that surrounds much contemporary poetry. The issue is not revision. The issue is whether language has the contingent quality of time or the fixed quality of a thing of space. Ginsberg revises--to <u>increase</u> spontaneity:

> These poems were printed first (in forms slightly closer to original composition, i.e. there has been some revision for syntactical condensation toward directer presentation of the original spontaneous imagery, a method similar to manicuring grass that is removal of seeds and twigs, ands, buts, ors especially ofs that don't contribute to getting the mind high[5]

"Kaddish" therefore, like <u>Empty Mirror</u> and "Howl," turns to prose; <u>Empty Mirror</u> because of its confessional austerity, "Howl" for the energy of the sentence, and "Kaddish" for the sake of immediacy. And like "Howl," "Kaddish" uses a long line. But here the resemblance ends. The Kaddish line has almost nothing in common with the "Howl" line or any of Ginsberg's other long lines. The Kaddish line is radically asymmetrical. Asymmetrical but not formless, for symmetry is not an equivalent but simply a quality of some forms. By asymmetry I mean lack of sameness, lack of proportion either within lines or among groups of lines. The types of symmetry we found in the earlier long lines were grammatical. Grammatical parallelism in "Howl" and in "Death

to Van Gogh's Ear!" had an ordering function and a rhetorical function. As a principle of order it replaced the metre and syllable-count of fixed line verse and counterbalanced freedom in breathing. As a rhetorical principle it structured various modes of speech. In "Howl," for example the "who & participle" stem created an incantatory rhetoric and induced a feeling of movement. In "At Apollinaire's Grave" Ginsberg rejected grammatical parallelism as incompatible with the poem's conversational tone, and the only symmetry was a rough regularity of breath. I noted that the poem's narrative trunk was a natural ordering principle that took up the slack. I could add that parallelism was incompatible with narrative because it is impossible to tell a story in parallel lines without becoming tedious. This applies to "Kaddish," and is a negative reason for its asymmetry.

But the deep reason for the asymmetry of the Kaddish line is its unique character among Ginsberg's lines. In "Howl," each line is one prose sentence, and the sentence-line is the structural unit. In "Kaddish" a line consists not of one sentence but of many sentence fragments. The line is not a sentence, but a cluster of sentences, a paragraph in fact:

> Last, the Proem to Kaddish--finally, completely free composition, the long line breaking up within itself into short staccato breath units--notations of one

> spontaneous phrase after another linked within the line by dashes mostly: the long line now perhaps a variable stanzaic unit, measuring groups of related ideas, grouping them--a method of notation.[6]

and it is each fragment in the Kaddish line, each hyphenated word-group that is a structural unit. Each unit in turn corresponds to an image or a response to an image recovered from memory. Hyphenation is Ginsberg's way of notating his memory in process, a process intrinsically asymmetrical. Kaddish is not formless, but Kaddish's form is necessarily asymmetrical.

Kaddish has a far wider range of utterance than any other long-line poem. Howl's utterance is as intense but far narrower. Kaddish divides into proem, narrative, lament, hymmnn, litany, and fugue sections, and the narrative section alone contains additional elements of invocation, elegy, eulogy, dialogue, drama, haiku, and surrealism. Add to this shifts in tone, mood, and feeling, and it is clear that Kaddish needs as open a structure as possible. The Kaddish line--"a variable stanzaic unit, measuring groups of related ideas"-is such a structure. Its elastic, hyphenated form lets it change its angle as the angle of consciousness changes:

> 12 riding the bus at nite thru New Jersey, have left Naomi to Parcae in Lakewood's haunted house--left to my own fate bus--sunk in a seat--all violins broken--my heart sore in my ribs--mind was empty--Would she were safe in her coffin--

(Kaddish, p. 15)

Ginsberg's memory closes on his 12-year-old self returning from the rest home. It begins to probe his feelings, looking at him all the while as an object, as another person than the one writing "Kaddish" in 1959. This backward through time perspective is expressed in perfect and imperfect tenses. The images, however, generate in the poet a growing empathy for his young self, until in the last fragment he experiences him as a subject. Emotively he becomes one with the 12-year-old, a change in perspective captured by a tense change to present subjunctive. Such grammatical flux is typical of the Kaddish line and made possible only by its elastic framework.

Similarly, this permits mid-line shifts in the angle of address:

> He took the morning train to Lakewood, Naomi still under bed--thought he brought poison Cops--Naomi screaming--
> Louis what happened to your heart then? Have you been killed by Naomi's ecstasy?
>
> (Kaddish, p. 17)

The voice turns from Louis in the third person in the past tense to direct address to Louis imagined as present.

"Kaddish"'s overall structure is as elastic and asymmetric as individual lines. "Kaddish" is in large part a narrative, the history of Naomi. Not the history of

Naomi as told by her biographer, but her history as it came to her son three years after her death. Its scope is the thirty-year range of Ginsberg's memories and even beyond. Ginsberg's mind ranges up and down that corridor of time, in no particular sequence. The result is a very fluid narrative built as a series of scenes, which have a way of decomposing, digressing into sub-scenes, and re-appearing pages later. The narrative is simply plotting out the path of the memory. The scene of Naomi's madness in Lakewood, for example, is punctured by images of Naomi's youth and flickers of Ginsberg's own childhood fantasies. It surfaces with Eugene hearing of Naomi's committal, which sets off a train of memories of Eugene. The idea is to let the memories take their own form as they return to time rather than to impose proportion in the manner of a biographer. The aim, again, is immediacy, or as Ginsberg calls it, direct presentation; to sight directly through the lens of the memory with a minimum of reflective afterthought. Consider the narrative of Eugene's return to Paterson:

> came Paterson-ward next day--and he sat on the broken-down couch in the living room--'We had to send her back to Greystone'--
> --his face perplexed, so young, then eyes with tears--then crept weeping all over his face--'What for?' wail vibrating in his cheekbones, eyes closed up, high voice--Eugene's face of pain.
>
> (Kaddish, p. 19)

The economical hyphens sort out only the main details:

when he came, where he sat, what he heard. Then the second line swoops in on Eugene for a close-up of almost cinematic immediacy.

Another key feature of the Kaddish line is rhythm. Ginsberg is aware that memory is rhythmic:

> the rhythm the rhythm--and your memory in my head three years after--
>
> (Kaddish, p. 7)

> Over and over--refrain--of the Hospitals--still haven't written your history--leave it abstract--a few images run thru the mind--like the saxaphone chorus of houses and years--
>
> (Kaddish, p. 13)

And rhythm is a way of plotting the variations of a consciousness, as Ginsberg showed in "My Alba" and "Siesta at Xbalba." At the end of "Howl," he devoted his poetry "to recreate the rhythms of thought in his naked and endless head." The uses of rhythm in models of consciousness have therefore absorbed Ginsberg for a very long time. In "Howl," "My Alba" or "Siesta at Xbalba," the line was both the rhythmic and the structural unit. In "Kaddish," it is the hyphen-group. Rhythm is a matter of patterning hyphen groups. And hyphen-groups can be patterned to evoke various states of mind. Patterns of irregular, long and short hyphen-groups produce jagged rhythms that might underscore uncertainty; patterns of quick, short-hyphen-groups might mean excitement; long groups with infrequent breath pauses,

moments of tranquillity. As in "My Alba," sudden shifts in mood can be heard in rhythmic reversals. This is well illustrated the last time Allen sees Naomi:

> Too thin, shrunk on her bones--age come to Naomi--now broken into white hair--loose dress on her skeleton--face sunk, old! withered--cheek of crone--
> One hand stiff--heaviness of forties & menopause reduced by one heart stroke, lame now--wrinkles--a scar on her head, the lobotomy--ruin, the hand dipping downwards to death--
>
> (Kaddish, p. 29)

Ginsberg's shock is expressed in an erratic cadence produced by many hyphen and comma pauses: "face sunk// old //withered//cheek of crone//." The momentum is repeatedly brought to a standstill by isolating single words with pauses--"lame now//wrinkles--//a scar on her head,// the lobotomy--//ruin, "--and then restarted.

But Ginsberg pulls himself out of the shock and launches into a half-desperate rhapsody to Naomi:

> O Russian faced, woman on the grass, your long black hair is crowned with flowers, the mandolin is on your knees--
> Communist beauty, sit here married in the summer among daisies, promised happiness at hand--
> holy mother, now you smile on your love, . . .
>
> (Kaddish, p. 29)

These are not Kaddish lines, but sentence-lines on the Howl model. They take long breaths, punctuated fully only at line's end. What's more they have a parallel structure: each

line is a blessing for a different name of Naomi. Their symmetrical, undulating rhythm underlines the transcendence this rhapsody momentarily achieves.

Ginsberg also develops certain model rhythmic patterns that recur at intervals like leitmotifs to denote related themes. Naomi's paranoia is expressed in a pattern of question marks:

> The enemies approach--what poisons? Tape recorders? FBI? Zhdanov hiding behind the counter? Trotsky mixing rat bacteria in the back of the store? Uncle Sam in Newark, plotting deathly perfumes in the Negro district? . . .
>
> (Kaddish, p. 18)

Later, as Allen and Eugene explore Paterson's sinister city hall, the same rhythm is heard:

> Silent polished desks in the great committee room--Aldermen? Bd of Finance? Mosca the hairdresser aplot--Crapp the gangster issuing orders from the john-- . . .
>
> (Kaddish, p. 19)

This is a subtle way of showing how Naomi's fear has embraced her sons.

CONCLUDING NOTE

In retrospect, the stumbling block in Ginsberg criticism seems to be not so much the lack of an adequate vocabulary as a failure to apply existing vocabulary to his forms. The idea of a free or unfixed line is not new; it is at least as old as the idea of a fixed line, and to modern readers, quite as familiar. But critics have not taken unfixed lines seriously. Formal analyses of free verse generally talk about everything but the line. Little of value has been said about Whitman's line, and Eliot's own comments are still the best on his line. Critics seem to assume that the standard accentual-syllabic line is the only true formed line in English and to suspect the unfixed line as something vaguely anarchic. My paper has tried to turn the idea of an unfixed line into a precise tool. Through its discussion of blank verse, where we see a fixed line breaking into an unfixed line, it tries to indicate exactly what an unfixed line can do that a fixed line can't. Ginsberg's mature poetry could not be realised through fixed lines. All the same, it is not an anti-poetry, but an outgrowth of major traditions in American poetry. I have indicated his formal links to Whitman, Williams and even Eliot. Once this continuity is appreciated, and his unfixed line absorbed and understood, Ginsberg's formal criticism can begin.

FOOTNOTES

INTRODUCTION

[1]John Ciardi's "Epitaph for the Dead Beats" Saturday Review, February 6, 1960, 11-13, is a fair sample of this line of criticism.

[2]Robert Beum and Karl Shapiro, A Prosody Handbook, New York: 1965, p. 48.

[3]This is not to discredit poetic syntax. Donald Davie in Articulate Energy, London: 1958, pp. 65-95, shows that the manipulation of syntax is a major, and often overlooked, resource of poets.

[4]T.S. Eliot, The Music of Poetry, Glasgow: 1942.

[5]Shakespeare, Complete Works, Oxford Standard Authors edition, ed. W.J. Craig, London: 1905. All quotations from Shakespeare are from this edition.

[6]Space precludes my arguing this point, if it needs arguing. Vittoria's speech in The White Devil, IV, ii, p. 56, ed. Travis Bogard, San Francisco: 1961, illustrates Webster's elastic line.

[7]Some statistics to support this argument: "A careful study of the metre of Shakespeare's plays has shown that, as he grew more experienced (1) his use of rhyme decreased: from 62% in Love's Labour's Lost, an early play to none (except in short-line songs) in the late play The Winter's Tale; (2) he ended more lines with an unaccented or unstressed syllable, from 8% in Love's Labour's Lost, to 35% in The Tempest; (3) he did not so often make the sense and the voice in reading pause at the end of a line, that is, there are fewer "end-stopt" lines; from 82% in Love's Labour's Lost to 59% in The Tempest (4) he more often ended a speech in the middle of a line; from 10% in Love's Labour's Lost to 88% in The Winter's Tale. Quoted from D.L. Chambers, The Metre of Macbeth, Princeton: 1903 by James Hugh Moffatt in his edition of Richard II, New York: 1924, (xii-xiii).

Every one of these points, but especially (3) and (4) confirm that Shakespeare gradually weakened his fixed line.

CHAPTER I

[1]Howl and other poems, San Francisco: 1956.

[2]'Notes Written on Finally Recording "Howl",' in A Casebook on the Beat, ed. Thomas Parkinson, New York: 1961, p. 28.

[3]"Song of Myself," Leaves of Grass, Comprehensive Reader's Edition, edited by Harold W. Blodgett and Sculley Bradley, New York: 1965.

[4]Charles Olson, "Projective Verse."

[5]"See Stotras to Kali" in Planet News, San Francisco: 1968.

[6]'Notes Written on Finally Recording "Howl",' in A Casebook on the Beat, ed. Thomas Parkinson, New York: 1961, p. 28.

[7]"At Apollinaire's Grave," Kaddish and other poems, 1958-60, San Francisco: 1961, p. 49.

[8]"Zone" in Selected Writings of Guillaume Apollinaire, ed. Roger Shattuck, New York: 1948, p. 117.

[9,10]"Notes . . ." p. 28.

[11]Quoted by Roger Shattuck in his introduction, p. 26.

[12]in Kaddish and other poems, pp. 60-64.

CHAPTER II

[1]Empty Mirror: Early Poems 1946-51, New York: 1961. Williams' introduction is dated 1952.

[2]Empty Mirror, p. 18.

[3]Théophile Gautier, a forerunner of imagism, expressed this orientation: "Toute ma valeur, c'est que je suis un homme pour qui le monde extérieur existe." Quoted by J.R. Lawler, An Anthology of French Poetry, New York: 1964, p. 64.

[4]Reality Sandwiches, 1953-60, San Francisco: 1963, p. 7, dated 1953.

[5]'Notes Written On Finally Recording "Howl",' in A Casebook on the Beat, ed. Thomas Parkinson, New York: 1961, p. 27.

[6]Ibid., p. 28.

[7]Reality Sandwiches, p. 21.

CHAPTER III

[1]Charles Olson, quoting Robert Creeley in "Projective Verse," Brooklyn: 1959.

[2]Geoffrey Dutton, Walt Whitman, Edinburgh: 1961.

[3]Robert Lowell, "A Visit to the Tates," Sewanee Review, LXVII, (1959), p. 558.

[4]Kaddish and other poems: 1958-1960, San Francisco: 1961, p. 7.

[5]Acknowledgements to Planet News, 1961-1967, San Francisco: 1968, p. 4.

[6]'Notes Written on Finally Recording "Howl",' p. 29.

A BRIEF ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

The number of good critical articles on Ginsberg can be counted on the fingers of one hand. This list contains book reviews and articles that have something to say about the problem of form in Ginsberg.

Ammons, A.R. "Ginsberg's New Poems," Poetry CIV (June 1964), 186-7. Reviews Reality Sandwiches. Makes a good stab at formal analysis--"The unit of form (meaning) rhythm, power in Ginsberg's poetry is the line"--but doesn't develop his intuition.

Apollinaire, Guillaume. Oeuvres Complètes, ed. Michel Decaudin, Paris: 1965-66, 4 v.

Beum, R. and Karl Shapiro. A Prosody Handbook, New York: 1965.

Ciardi, J. "Epitaph for the Dead Beats," Saturday Review, 43 (February 6, 1960), 11-13. Also in Casebook on the Beat, ed. Thomas Parkinson, New York: 1961, p. 257.
An intelligent example of the anti-Ginsberg criticism. Praises the catalogue technique in "Howl."

Chambers, D.L. The Metre of Macbeth, Princeton: 1903.

Creeley, R., "An Interview with Robert Creeley," The Sullen Art, David Ossman, New York: 1962.
"He /Ginsberg/ is a conscious writer. I mean by that, that he is aware of the technical problems of putting words on a page in a consequent or coherent manner. He specifically seems to be intent on handling this long line that Whitman developed in a manner, again, specific to the content that Allen is involved with."

Eliot, T.S. The Music of Poetry, Glasgow: 1942.
Eliot's most succinct comments on his ideas of free verse.

Ginsberg, A. Empty Mirror: Early Poems, 1946-51. New York: 1961.

_____. Reality Sandwiches, 1953-1960. San Francisco: 1963.

_____. Howl and other poems, San Francisco: 1956.

_____. Kaddish and other poems, 1958-1960. San Francisco: 1961.

_____. Airplane Dreams: Compositions from Journals, Toronto: 1968.

_____. T.V. Baby Poems: London: 1967.

_____. Planet News, 1961-1967. San Francisco: 1968.

_____, with William S. Burroughs. The Yage Letters, San Francisco: 1963. (Not poetry, but an exchange of letters.)

_____. "Poetry, Violence and the Trembling Lambs," Parkinson, p. 24.

_____. 'Notes Written on Finally Recording "Howl",' Parkinson, p. 27.

_____. Interviewed by David Ossman, The Sullen Art, New York: 1961, 58-59.

_____. Interviewed by Paul Caroll, Playboy, April, 1969, 81-92, 234-44.

Hazel, R. "Prefigures," The Nation, CXCIII (Nov. 1, 1961), 381-82.
Warm review of Empty Mirror, sees the connection to Williams' anti-poetic principle and the influence of a Cranian rhetoric; appreciates the book's confessional character.

Hunsberger, B. 'Kit Smart's "Howl",' WSCL, VI (Winter, 1965), 34-44. Extended comparison of Christopher Smart's Jubilate Agno and Ginsberg's "Howl". Most of the points are superficial.

Kerouac, J. "Essentials of Spontaneous Prose," Evergreen Review, II, no. 5, (Summer, 1958), 72-73. Also in Parkinson, 65-67.
"Belief & Technique for Modern Prose," Evergreen Review, II, no. 8, (Spring, 1960). Also in Parkinson, 67-68.
Capsule summaries of Kerouac's theory and practice which illuminate Ginsberg, especially "Kaddish", because of the many points of contact between these writers.

Manganotti, Donatella. "Aspetti della poesia di Allen Ginsberg," Studi Americani, X, (1964), 395-427.
A study of Ginsberg's themes.

Marlowe, C. The Complete Plays of Christopher Marlowe, ed. Irving Ribner, New York: 1963.

Olson, C. "Projective Verse," Brooklyn: 1959.
A stimulating, but not very useful document on the free line.

Oppen, G. "Three Poets," Poetry, C, (August 1962), 329-31.
Reviews "Kaddish," stresses its oral quality.

Parkinson, T. ed. A Casebook on the Beat, New York: 1961.
A useful source-book on the beat movement a decade ago. Contains selections from various beat writers and articles not listed here.

_____. "Phenomenon or Generation," Casebook, p. 291.
Suggestive comments on the idea of a poem as a score, on lining, capitalisation, typography as notation for voice.

Rexroth, K. "Disengagement: The Art of the Beat Generation," Parkinson, p. 179.
Sociological rather than critical.

Rosenthal, M.L. "Poet of the New Violence," The Nation, CLXXXIV, February 23, 1957), 162.
Despite misgivings, acknowledges Ginsberg as an important voice. Refers to his "adaptations of cadence to rhetorical and colloquial rhythms."

_____. "Other Confessional Poets," The Modern Poets: a Critical Introduction, New York: 1960.

Shakespeare, W. Shakespeare Complete Works, Oxford Standard Authors edition, ed. W.J. Craig, London: 1905.

Shattuck, R. translator and editor, Selected Writings of Guillaume Apollinaire, New York: 1948.
Excellent discussion of Apollinaire's line in the introduction.

Surrey, Henry Howard, Earl of, Poems, ed. Emrys Jones, Oxford: 1964.

Tallman, W. "Kerouac's Sound", The Tamarack Review, (Spring, 1959), 58-74. Also in Parkinson, p. 215.
Study of Kerouac's style; comments on spontaneous composition useful for Ginsberg.

Webster, J. Selected Plays of Webster and Ford, ed. G.B. Harrison, London: 1933.

Whitman, W. Leaves of Grass: Comprehensive Reader's Edition, ed. Harold W. Blodgett and Sculley Bradley, New York: 1965.

Williams, W.C. "Introduction to Empty Mirror," Empty Mirror, New York: 1961.

_____. "Introduction to Howl and other poems," San Francisco: 1956.

For other entries, consult the bibliographies at the back of Parkinson op. cit. and Allen Ginsberg: A Bibliography and Biographical Sketch, Edward Z. Mankin, THOTH, VIII, (Winter, 1967), 40-44.