

The Radical Road to Redemption: A Prophetic Outcry of American Counter
Cultures

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ABSTRACT

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The development of atomic weapons presented serious changes to the American way of life. Moral actions in accordance with this divine decree were seen as the path to salvation. While citizens had operated under the assumption that the government upheld the will of God and had the best interests of the people at heart, apocalyptic implications caused that belief to shift. The government now had the power to end the world. Salvation could only be ensured through its protection. In order to keep civilians from questioning the agenda of officials seeking a surge of military build-up propaganda was set into motion in order to promote a specific manner of behavior. Without having to explain their actions the government could maintain the idea that they were doing what was morally right, despite the apocalyptic repercussions they made possible. For this reason they promoted submissive behavior and oppressed American citizens.

Allen Ginsberg and Mario Savio were two counter cultural figures in this country's history who knew that the path being promoted would not lead to salvation. Rather than docile, unquestioning, and mechanical actions they sought to relay the sacred nature of individuality and free expression. Behaving as James Darsey's conception of a prophet and Foucault's specific individual they struggled to enlighten their audiences to an alternative way of life and the salvation it would provide. They provided those around them with the tools to create the changes necessary to achieve

this freedom and redemption. Ginsberg and Savio were able to turn the machine imagery used in propaganda to perpetuate oppression against the government. By describing the lifeless drear of industry as opposed to the sacred vitality of the organic they helped others to understand how true salvation could be found.

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INTRODUCTION

In *The Prophetic Tradition and Radical Rhetoric in America*, James Darsey describes a covenant as a “set of principles” which define the premise behind judgment for a group of people (Darsey 20). Before World War I Americans operated under an assumption that the government acted in the best interest of citizens’ salvation. As a nation founded around Christian conceptions of redemption it would seem that someone with the ethos of a government official would place grave importance upon divine decree. With this assumption solidly in place many things, such as the glorification of war, were accepted as carrying out God’s will. This idea appealed to Americans feeling that they were fighting against evil on behalf of a better world. As Darsey explains, members of the Whig party in this country’s history believed “When fighting on the side of God against the devil, even the most extreme measures of defense are not only sanctioned but mandated in the appeal to natural law or God’s law” (Darsey 47). This statement, as well as the reference to “nature’s God” in the Declaration of Independence, demonstrates America’s faith in God and willingness to fight for what was posed as God’s will. The government was perpetuating an idea of Americans fulfilling God’s plan. For this reason citizens were assured that the path they were on undoubtedly led to salvation. They had no reason to question of the motives of the government officials who made decisions regarding their lives. Supporting one’s country meant supporting God’s will, and following that set of principles would certainly assure redemption. Through this manner of action patriotism came to be a large part of the accepted covenant.

The advent of atomic weapons signaled a drastic shift in covenant. Citizens had been living their lives based on the concept that morally right actions in accordance with God's will would lead them away from apocalyptic horrors, to salvation. Before the development of the atomic bomb apocalyptic power was completely in the hands of God. Through morally right actions one could be sure that they had secured redemption. Now man had the power to end the world and that power presented serious implications regarding the actions that would lead to salvation. God was no longer solely responsible for the fate of humankind. The development of these weapons weakened the logic surrounding the concept of the U.S. government carrying out God's wishes. Despite the obvious lack of reason propaganda continued to perpetuate the idea that officials were acting in citizens' best interest. As civilians began to grasp the fact that moral actions would no longer lead them away from apocalyptic horrors, the government set forces into motion to counter that idea. Posing their use of atomic weapons as a direct path to secure the free world and help God prevail, they struggled to keep the American covenant intact. This resulted in a covenant that relied much more heavily upon government involvement in salvation. Apocalyptic danger was relayed as an immediate threat and propaganda posed the government as the only entity that could provide safety and, therefore, salvation. While the covenant still operated around upholding the wishes of God, salvation from apocalypse now lay in the hands of government officials.

This covenant created citizens who were completely dependent upon the authoritative structures in this country. With the government being posed as the only way to ensure safety from apocalyptic weapons and their consequences, officials took on a God-like ethos. Citizens believed patriotism to be essential to their covenant and understood the actions of their country to be what was morally right. In order to maintain this conception of a covenant it was necessary for officials to sustain this ethos, superior

to explaining their actions. It was essential for Americans to remain submissive and unquestioning to the authorities in power. By preventing any inquiry regarding their intentions they could avoid explanations that would reveal the moral inconsistencies in military endeavors. For this reason a mass propaganda campaign was set into motion in order to create submissive citizens, fearful of questioning the authority of the government. This docile behavior would allow officials to promote support of developing atomic weapons without revealing the immorality of apocalyptic endeavors and, therefore, a separation from the covenant.

Due to this shift in the covenant which presented moral inconsistencies, America was in need of what Darsey poses as a prophet. This person would be designated to reveal the true path to those willing to listen. Through knowledge that others have strayed from the covenant a prophet is said to understand that those around him or her are not living in a way that will provide redemption. In order to help others correct their errors prophets seek to enlighten those who will listen toward the appropriate way of life. Acting as God's servants, spreading the message of how one should live, prophets seek to help redeem those around them. Due to the fact that a prophet must necessarily speak against the accepted norms of the conventional culture, there is an extremely radical element to the message. Because of this radical nature, many prophets are often perceived as being madmen and those they are attempting to lead to salvation may refuse to listen. For this reason the prophetic figures in this country's history have been ignored, opposed, and persecuted due to attempts to spread a message they knew to be sacred. Darsey explains the presence of this violent opposition as martyrdom the prophet must withstand for the cause. In order to demonstrate faith in the actions they speak on behalf of, prophets must show their willingness to face personal harm in order to defend their positions. This martyrdom provides the message of the prophet with a

strong ethos, presenting onlookers with the knowledge that the prophet values his message enough to suffer through extreme circumstances. Prophetic figures in America have often been called counter cultural, when not simply crazy, and have confronted severe violence in order to spread their message to the public. Despite the opposition and persecution they encountered, their success can be observed through the movements they were involved in.

In an attempt to solidify their proposed covenant and garner public acceptance regarding the apocalyptic implications of military build-up, the government began executing their plan through a document produced by the National Security Council (NSC). *NSC 68* warned Americans of the intense threat that Soviet forces presented and explained that it was the responsibility of the U.S. to act in opposition. After this document solidified government officials' plans regarding an increase in military spending and strength, it was essential to achieve the support of civilians. Understanding that the goals set forth within the NSC's document would be impossible in the face of interference, a propaganda campaign was launched into action in order to promote behavior that would allow these actions to be carried out.

One form of propaganda involved in this campaign to harness the citizens' support was issued through educational films. The stated purposes of these films ranged from social instruction to survival tactics, however, the underlying messages were substantially more manipulative. Films explaining how to become popular encouraged submissive behavior among the youth of this country. Survival information related to atomic weapons desensitized audiences to the threat of the bomb, as well as misrepresenting the degree of damage that would be caused. Other films promoted unquestioning compliance to authority, conformity, and issued a skewed concept of patriotism relating salvation to subservient dependence upon the government. This was

portrayed as educational information to make students more socially aware; however, the specific behavior deemed appropriate produced obedient citizens unwilling to question the authority of the government. This docile behavior allowed officials to carry out military operations that placed the U.S. in apocalyptic danger without any serious confrontation from civilians. The population of the United States was coerced into a state of extreme submission, feeling they had no authority to question decisions that directly affected their lives. This failure to question military actions allowed government officials to carry out plans which had apocalyptic implications. With the possibility of ending the world, it seems this plan could not have been further from the path to redemption that American citizens were in search of.

Understanding that this was not the true path to salvation, Allen Ginsberg was one prophetic figure who helped change the circumstances of American culture in dramatic ways. Growing up in the oppressive atmosphere of McCarthy's Red Scare, he observed an entire civilization in fear. Accusations of communist affiliations were far too prevalent and presented severe consequences. Citizens were afraid to express their opinions, artists were deterred from producing radical material, and teachers found it difficult to keep their jobs in the midst of such political suspicion. Ginsberg understood that this oppressive environment was pushing the American public directly away from salvation. He knew that the imposed conformity was only limiting people, provoking too much fear to allow for any individuality. Instead, citizens were literally being told to behave like machinery, abandoning the sacred nature of their own humanity. Creating poetry that challenged the submissive path promoted by propaganda, Ginsberg illuminated what he believed to be the true covenant. He portrayed the sacred nature of experiences, ideas, and individuals, posed against the lifeless, drear of machines and industrialization. This allowed his audience to understand that salvation would not be

achieved without their acceptance of consciousness. He helped them to see the holy nature of a conscious life as opposed to the unquestioning submission promoted by authorities within this country.

Mario Savio was another individual who provided Americans with a radical presentation of a prophetic message. Speaking out against the same oppression that Ginsberg had resisted, Savio expressed the importance of free speech in regard to redemption. Explaining that without freedom of speech we could not ensure justice, he provoked action as a defiant response to the inflicted oppression. If authorities wanted citizens to behave like parts in a machine, Savio explained that they would simply have to stop the machines altogether. Merely moving through one's life mechanically, without question would not lead to salvation. Savio made it clear that a conscious effort to perpetuate justice in our society was the only way to achieve redemption. In order to spread that message he endured extreme persecution, rising as a martyr for the cause. As Darsey explains, this added ethos to the cause, but Savio also used martyrdom in another way. By martyring himself, and asking others to do the same, he demonstrated to his audience that they could physically create change. He presented the idea that their cause, to secure free speech and justice, was worth their lives. This not only demonstrated the depth of conviction within the movement, but also created a surge of action which was able to literally stop the machine.

Ginsberg and Savio are also behaving as what Michel Foucault would describe as a specific intellectual. Foucault explains that through resistance, power can be asserted by an oppressed group. A specific intellectual is an individual who helps to provoke this resistance through providing others with the tools necessary to achieve the appropriate change. The experiences of the specific intellectual are very important, providing that person with the knowledge needed to both understand the situation and

the correct path to change the unfavorable circumstances. At this period in America's history a prophet was necessarily acting as a specific intellectual. Citizens were instructed that a particular manner of behavior would lead them to redemption, but Ginsberg and Savio knew that the status quo would not provide salvation. Describing an oppressive power structure such as this Foucault explained, "it is not that the beautiful totality of the individual is amputated...it is rather that the individual is carefully fabricated in it, according to a whole technique of forces and bodies" (Foucault 228).

Understanding that individuality within the U.S. was being fabricated through manipulative propaganda, Ginsberg and Savio attempted to overcome oppressive forces and show that salvation could only be achieved by valuing true individuality. They both demonstrated the presence of a specific intellect within their respective movements. They identified with those who held similar conviction about the issues they were discussing and provided them with innumerable tools. By doing this they allowed others to understand that they could reclaim their power to speak. While they fully understood that they did not yet have the power to be heard by everyone, they also knew the importance of spreading their message. Foucault explains a discursive formation as being all of the information, customs, and rules that circulate during a given period of time. Due to the fact that it encompassed all the knowledge a group possessed, it was important for counter cultural groups to make their own contribution. Without the power to release their experiences and opinions into circulation they were unable to be heard or understood by the dominant culture at that time. Revealing their opinions to the world, Ginsberg and Savio demonstrated that every individual had the ability to express him or herself. They helped their audiences to understand the value in their ideas and experiences, showing them that they had the authority to speak about the situation they were in. If citizens were unhappy with their circumstances, these men let them know those concerns were valid.

One of the most effective tools Ginsberg and Savio shared, aside from the spoken word, was the use of machine imagery. Images of industry, assembly lines, and machine parts had been used by authorities in their quest to develop a submissive nation. These men turned that imagery around, using it to display that there was no doubt American had strayed from the covenant. Ginsberg first presented his audiences with the idea that they, as humans, were what was sacred in this world. In an atmosphere that had been promoting the idea that one's thoughts and feelings were not important and should be suppressed, this was a shocking concept. Ginsberg posed his presentation of sacred humanity against images of death and grime. His message allowed his audience to separate themselves from the industry that had engulfed America. This helped those who heard his message to understand that another path existed, involving freedom of expression and the value of human life. Through this action Ginsberg necessarily illuminated the path to salvation.

Almost a decade later, Savio used the same machine imagery to invoke a similar understanding within the activists at Berkeley. Ginsberg had already displayed the filth of industry in comparison to the sacred beauty of life. Savio used the momentum of this idea to help convey his message in extremely emotional terms. Setting those within the movement apart from the bureaucrats, he explained that while officials may want students to become cogs in a machine, the students had no intention of fulfilling that role. He wasn't simply portraying the differences in machinery and humanity, as Ginsberg had started out doing. He was posing the machinery as a position citizens were being forced into. Displaying the industrial focus of university officials, he rejected the concept of individuals being looked at as mere products. In that sense the students at Berkeley were simply the means to an end for the officials in question. Explaining the unjust nature of this perspective, as well as the idea that it allowed other injustices to

take place across America if not the world, Savio incited extreme emotion within the crowd before him.

It seems clear when observing each movement and the historical context that surrounds it that these men achieved monumental changes. Understanding that the most popular actions during their respective eras were wrong, they helped enlighten those who were willing to accept change to the correct path and, therefore, salvation. While they were often dismissed as lunatics, it cannot be disputed that their messages thrived. Over fifty years later their impact is obvious. They would not tolerate a life of submission and the persecution of their beliefs. In response they spoke out in order to illuminate the atrocities committed by the forces of oppression in American society to those around them. By allowing others to understand that they could assert their power, redefine their own realities, and create spaces for the lifestyles they wanted to live, Ginsberg and Savio were able to provoke a serious expansion of knowledge within the world. Persecuted members of society learned their value and reclaimed their power to speak and eventually be heard. Through the use of rhetoric, intense imagery, public speaking, and unity these men were able to make statements that would still be highly charged and influential over half a century later.

CHAPTER ONE: *NSC 68*

National Security Council document 68 presents a glimpse of the National Security Council (NSC) in its beginning stages. The NSC was formed under the National Security Act of July 26, 1947. The function of the council was outlined as existing “to advise the President on integration of domestic, foreign, and military policies relating to national security and to facilitate interagency cooperation. At the President’s direction, the NSC could also assess and appraise risks to U.S. national security, consider policies, and then report or make recommendations to the President” (FAS). When *NSC 68* was drafted in April of 1950 the council had only been in operation for three years. Perhaps this serves as an explanation for the course of events that led to the drafting of the document in question. Due to the fact that their methods had not had time to become more solidified, they may have allowed more deviation from the committee’s normal methods of operation. The resulting product revealed the American nation to be in imminent danger of a communist plot to destroy the free world. The apocalyptic warning was conveyed, as well as the idea that it was the moral responsibility of Americans to defend the world from this threat.

Paul H. Nitze, the director of the Policy Planning Staff during the drafting of *NSC 68*, used the document as a way to present President Truman with a case for military expansion. In December of 1949, Dean Acheson had given George F. Kennan the title of Counselor and promoted Nitze to the position of director of the Policy Planning Staff. Scholars have noted that “Kennan did not share Acheson’s belief that containment required substantial military forces. . .” and that “Acheson may have been doubly eager for a policy planning chief more inclined than Kennan to approach the cold war as a war”

(May 9). In this circumstance it was crucial that Acheson appoint someone who agreed with the threat of the Cold War and the danger the Soviets presented due to the fact that the reality of these threats was doubted by many. In an atmosphere that included Soviet development of atomic weapons, Cold War danger, and the looming threat of war with Korea, many government officials thought that a build-up of military forces was necessary. This document allowed those officials to voice their opinions, discuss the need for military funding, and at times to skew the information in order to emphasize the impending doom this nation was facing. Nitze was said to believe that the force of the document came primarily from the “logic and persuasiveness” of the language used while Acheson, Truman’s secretary of state and the man who appointed Nitze, “characterized it as exhortation” (May 9). Acheson would later write “The purpose of NSC-68 was to so bludgeon the mass mind of ‘top government’ that not only could the President make a decision but that the decision could be carried out. . . The task of a public officer seeking to explain and gain support for a major policy is not that of the writer of a doctoral thesis” (May 9). This statement reveals the purpose of the document as restricting discussion to a degree that would allow Truman to carry out a decision without interference. With a number of government officials disagreeing about the degree of the threat presented by the Cold War it was crucial for those promoting military expansion to confine discussions regarding Truman’s decisions to a minimum. His statement also provides an understanding of Acheson’s perspective regarding NSC 68, demonstrating his lack of concern regarding logic. Contrasting the document and a doctoral thesis, he admits his belief that logic is not what provided the driving force. Classifying the language used as exhortation, it seems that the urgent warnings regarding the threat to this nation were Acheson’s preferred method of persuasion. The language depicting apocalyptic danger within the document comes across as the most manipulative tool included. While Nitze may have liked the driving force of NSC 68 to be

the logic involved, it seems clear that the manipulative exhortation was what perpetuated the consequential actions. The propaganda that was put into action as a result of the document promoted the idea that patriotic citizens were submissive to authority and failed to question government policies. Americans were told that they were in severe peril of apocalyptic horrors and their path to survival could only be secured by the government. The document presented civilians with the idea that Soviet forces sought to destroy the free world and that it was America's moral responsibility to fight for freedom. Through the use of both fear and moral responsibility, NSC 68 manipulated the American public into submitting their country to apocalyptic doom. By failing to question the depth of the Soviet threat and the necessity of atomic weapons, citizens allowed government officials to disregard the threat that was presented.

The climate of the United States during the time of World War II caused many citizens to become concerned with what they perceived as a decline in moral character. Feeling that World War I had produced what literary figures had been discussing as the "Lost Generation," they sought a way to again assert the value of moral integrity. During the course of the First World War good men had been sent to war only to come back mentally and physically damaged. Confronted with this display that good actions might not always lead to a good future, Americans lost faith in their hope of what had been promised as a result of morally sound actions. This lack of moral consideration became a popular topic among literary figures of that time period, and the term "Lost Generation" was coined by Gertrude Stein and later made popular by Ernest Hemingway. The attention given to this matter in literary works of the time seems to display the dramatic effect this must have had on the citizens and culture in America during that period. If James Darsey, in *The Prophetic Tradition and Radical Rhetoric in America*, describes a covenant as a set of values that would lead to redemption, it seems clear that Americans

believing that moral actions would lead to their salvation would have been confronted with serious doubts concerning their paths. With World War I serving as an example, the covenant regarding moral behavior had been weakened. Citizens were now left unsure of the way they should live. Along with this confusion, the Cold War was also being discussed in the media as a growing and severe threat. Bureaucratic officials were faced with a group of citizens prime for manipulation and a threat that they wished to counter with military force. In their attempts to facilitate the appropriate mindset authorities set propaganda into motion that would relay the depth of moral responsibility involved in a build-up of military strength, as well as why it was absolutely necessary for survival. *NSC 68* presented government officials with an opportunity to confront the president with reasons for expanding U.S. military forces. In 1949 the Cold War had seemed to die down and Truman proposed a serious cut in military spending. However, due to Soviet development of the atomic bomb fears regarding this threat rose and Truman eventually requested that the National Security Council examine the country's possible options.

On August 10, 1949, Congress made several organizational amendments to the Act of 1947 (Matchette). The original makeup of the council appointed seven permanent members: the President, the Secretaries of State, Defense, Army, Navy, Air Force, and the Chairman of the National Security Resources Board (FAS). Congress called for a reorganization of members, removing three of the service secretaries and adding the Vice President and Joint Chiefs of Staff as permanent advisors of the council. President Truman was not in favor of the council, mostly due to disdain for the idea that Congress was legislating who could advise him regarding matters of national security. For this reason he kept himself at a distance from the council for the first three years it was in operation. Truman was said to have attended the first session of the NSC on

September 26, 1947, and then failed to come to all but ten of the next fifty-five meetings held. This clearly demonstrates Truman's aversion towards this council, and the loss of Presidential power that it brought with it.

In 1949 several events brought to light a crucial need for coordination of national security policy: "NATO was formed, military assistance for Europe was begun, the Soviet Union detonated an atomic bomb, and the Communists gained control in China" (FAS). In response President Truman contacted Dean Acheson on January 31, 1950, requesting that the NSC conduct "a reexamination of our objectives in peace and war and of the effect of these objectives on our strategic plans" (May 4). The urgency of the context that 1949 presented allowed the formal operations of the NSC to be skewed enough for "approval of an ad hoc interdepartmental committee" to be granted (FAS). Under the head of Policy Planning, Paul Nitze, this group's specific focus would be on drafting the contents of *NSC 68*. Normal operations of the committee under Truman's administration called for a draft of NSC papers to be written by the Policy Planning Staff, a discussion of that draft to be held at an NSC meeting, and submission of the resulting document to the president (FAS). If the president approved it would result in NSC action, and the relevant information would be shared with bureaucratic officials. *NSC 68* presents different circumstances, however, due to the fact that an ad hoc committee was formed to construct the draft. This kept discussion of the document confined to an interdepartmental committee, assuring that the information would be restricted to a very small group. It was sent directly to President Truman and then back to the NSC for a cost analysis. A final decision regarding the suggestions made was not reached until the Korean War broke out, pushing Truman to make some move regarding military power.

Prior to his involvement with the NSC, Nitze had acted as the head of the United States Strategic Bombing Survey team. After appraising the devastation in Hiroshima

he noted, “the bomb damage had not been paralyzing” (May 4). Later, he also helped manage the European Recovery Program, during which time he witnessed how fearful Europeans were toward the Red Army. These experiences help to portray the perspective that Nitze had regarding the state of affairs surrounding the nation’s security and *NSC 68*. The positions held by Nitze before his actions in the NSC display a man who already had a reason to dislike and fear the Soviet army. His work surveying the aftermath of Hiroshima also provides an impression of someone unwilling to admit the actual repercussions related to atomic weapons. It is difficult to deny that the effects of the bomb were indeed “paralyzing” when reviewing the reality of the damage that was caused. It seems that his perspective is revealed here as having a strong bias towards the development of apocalyptic weapons. “NSC 68 was Nitze’s first major assignment,” and it seems probable that his perspective at that point was deeply affected by the work he had done prior (May 9). When appointed as policy planning chief by Secretary of State Dean Acheson, Nitze had already expressed his disagreement with Truman’s cuts on military spending. This outlook, combined with his previous comments dispelling the horrific nature of the bomb and relaying the threat of the Red Army, made him the prime candidate for fulfilling Acheson’s agenda.

Nitze’s construction of the subcommittee drafting *NSC 68* can only be seen as a manipulative effort to keep interference to a minimum. As Earnest May, author of *American Cold War Strategy: Interpreting NSC 68*, describes it, “Nitze formed a committee consisting of himself, a few members of his staff, a handful of Acheson’s intimates, and four Defense officials” (May 10). It is easy to see how problematic such a tight-knit committee would be. The most restrictive requirement regarding Nitze’s committee was the prerequisite of a “Q Clearance” (May 10). This was the clearance level necessary to view the Atomic Energy Commission’s (AEC) restricted data. Other

than members of the AEC, Q clearances were not often granted. Due to this secrecy “the result of the requirement was to confine the drafting of the document to a very small circle” (May 11). Other government officials were strictly kept in the dark on issues dealing with the committee, including most White House staff, officials in the Treasury, and the Bureau of the Budget. Due to the privacy this allowed the committee was able to draft the document within weeks, building consensus among supporters while postponing any opposition. One of the most coercive tactics used during the creation of this document had to do with the process of harnessing support that began after the original draft. Meetings were arranged with outsiders who held the proper clearance. Minutes of the sessions reveal that these people came in, one by one, to discuss the contents of *NSC 68*. Nitze and his colleagues were said to have appeared very open to suggestions regarding amendments to the document. After each meeting the outsiders were said to have left with an understanding that changes would be made and, therefore, a general sense of approval regarding the plans and suggestions made. There is no evidence suggesting that those changes were ever taken into account, making it appear as if these meetings were simply held to obtain support under false pretenses.

Through this practice Nitze was able to gain several influential supporters. In a matter of weeks the document had won the approval of J. Robert Oppenheimer, Henry D. Smyth, and Ernest O. Lawrence. This accomplishment was noteworthy not only because of the status of these men in the scientific field, but also due to the fact that they were said to disagree often. The president of Harvard University, James Bryan Conant, and the president of the Rockefeller Foundation, Chester Bernard, were also among constituents. The most important supporter gained, however, was said to be Robert A. Lovett. According to Ernest May, Lovett had “been under secretary of state for

Marshall, and...was known as the person whom Marshall trusted most" (May 11). As a lifelong Republican, Lovett was also "known to be close to and trusted by Republican Senate leader Arthur H. Vandenberg" (May 11). It is easy to see how influential this man may have been due to the connections he possessed. Despite the pull that had already been gained Nitze didn't stop there, going on to seek endorsement from several high ranking government officials. By the time he had finished rounding up support from outside the committee no one felt that they had the authority to question the professional qualifications of anyone involved. From scientists participating in experiments with the atomic bomb to distinguished officials with extensive wartime experience, Nitze had brought in an authority on anything that may have been questioned. By doing this he prevented interference from those who failed to share the ideas within *NSC 68*.

The highest obstacle Nitze and Acheson faced in the process of putting *NSC 68* into action was approval from President Truman. Truman's disdain for the document stemmed from various different facts regarding the situation. He disliked the power that the NSC asserted over him. In addition, he wasn't convinced of the threat the Cold War presented. The most compelling reasons for Truman to disagree with the plans proposed in *NSC 68* were his opinions regarding the country's budget. Prior to requesting that the NSC draft the document he had made a decision to trim military spending drastically, proposing that it be decreased by almost a billion dollars. After this decision it would be difficult to persuade him that military expansion was necessary. The document was presented to the president in February of 1950. After reading the document Truman immediately issued a response that it be handled with "special security precautions" and that "no publicity be given this report or its contents" (May 14). He then went on to request comments from his staff regarding military spending, stating publicly after reading the document that he wanted military spending to continue on its

decline. Soon after this statement Truman must have begun to see that he had limited options. Despite the fact that *NSC 68* was classified, Truman's continued conservatism regarding the military budget was countered with press releases echoing the "top secret" themes. Ernest K. Lindley published an article in *Newsweek* stating that, "Because of the relative pace of military modernization in the Soviet Union and the West, the years of 1952 to 1954 would be 'a period of maximum danger'"(May 14). As opposed to rejecting the authority that surrounded the document entirely, Truman instead set considerations into motion regarding the costs and broader implications of the actions suggested in the document. Through this method of diversion Truman was able to delay the process of *NSC 68* until the summer. On June 25, 1950 news traveled revealing the beginning of the Korean War. Military build-up was imminent. *NSC 68* could be delayed no longer, and "thereafter the Council met every Thursday and the President attended all but seven of its seventy-one remaining meetings" (FAS). On September 30, 1950 Truman ordered that *NSC 68* be regarded "as a statement of policy to be followed over the next four or five years and...that the implementing programs...be put into effect as rapidly as feasible" (May 14). As a result of this decree, military spending tripled and remained two to three times higher than it had been previously for the next forty years.

It is clear from the records regarding *NSC 68* that while many high ranking officials including President Truman may not have been in favor of the policy, their options under the circumstances were seriously limited. In the face of the Korean War on top of the existing threats, *NSC 68* was put into effect. When considering the contents of *NSC 68* Truman's reasoning behind demands of secrecy regarding the document become very clear. It is also much easier to understand why he was so clearly manipulated when media leaks began to surface. The tone of *NSC 68* is one of looming apocalyptic horror. It explicitly states, "With the development of increasingly

terrifying weapons of mass destruction, every individual faces the ever-present possibility of annihilation should the conflict enter the phase of total war...this Republic and its citizens...stand in their deepest peril...involving the fulfillment or destruction not only of this Republic but of civilization itself.” (NSC 4 [corrected]). The specific phrasing used when describing the horrors the country faced relays a message of intense danger. The underlying purpose of the document comes across clearly as the need to endorse a build-up of military forces, promoting it repeatedly and stating, “One of the most important ingredients of power is military strength” (NSC 21). In order to solidify the importance of the military in this situation, the document repeatedly positions America as the savior of the free world. The term “imposed” is used most often in regard to “the responsibility of world leadership” that had landed upon the United States (NSC 9). Stating, “We have no such freedom of choice, and least of all in the use of force,” the document places this task of leadership out of the hands of officials in charge and into the realm of moral responsibility (NSC 11). The message conveyed portrays a situation in which the inaction of the U.S. compromises the security of the free world beyond repair. The moral responsibility with which Americans were then faced, paired with an apocalyptic threat, provided the appropriate atmosphere to foster the increase in military strength that the NSC had been seeking.

Understanding the importance of civilian cooperation regarding these matters, *NSC 68* includes several comments about the role of an American citizen in this context. Bringing in elements from the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the Declaration of Independence to outline one’s patriotic duties, the document described “determination to create conditions under which our free and democratic system can live and prosper; and our determination to fight if necessary to defend our way of life” (NSC 5). These descriptions clearly demonstrate how the document connected the support of military

build-up with the concept of being a patriotic American. Threatening not only the doom of nuclear war, but also the perversion of the American way of life allowed the writers of NSC 68 to provoke fear regarding every aspect of the lives of U.S. citizens. The document describes the Soviet “value system” as being “so wholly irreconcilable with ours, so implacable in its purpose to destroy ours. . .” that Americans needed to be aware of the threat communists presented to the American culture (NSC 9). The horrors portrayed throughout this document have been studied in depth by Joseph Masco, author of *The Nuclear Borderlands: The Manhattan Project in Post-Cold War New Mexico*. While the fear instilled by the document allowed the officials drafting it to harness support for the war, Masco points out some problematic elements regarding the level of terror that was achieved. Masco quotes Guy Oakes, author of *The Imaginary War: Civil Defense and American Cold War Culture*, describing the government’s needs to “emotionally manage” citizens, transferring a feeling of “nuclear terror” into a less paralyzing emotion, “nuclear fear” (Masco 366). By provoking this shift in emotion the government was able to foster a more active perspective regarding the war. It served to keep citizens in favor of simultaneously funding experiments for a bomb while being told that the same bomb could end civilization altogether. While the document had expressed an idea of America under “total and unending threat,” it reinforced a belief that by listening to the government one could survive the impending apocalypse (Masco 363). They “created a new citizen-state relationship mediated by nuclear fear” which allowed the government to prescribe action without questions or interference (Masco 362).

Nitze and his fellow committee members included a statement to clarify why there was a serious need for this lack of inquiry into matters dealing with the atmosphere at hand. The document explains that “the democratic way is harder than the

authoritarian way because, in seeking to protect and fulfill the individual, it demands of him understanding, judgment and positive participation in the increasingly complex and exacting problems of the modern world” (NSC 23). This portion serves as an explanation that through choosing to live in a democratic society you are necessarily bound to use understanding, judgment, and positive participation in all endeavors presented by that society. The language used is particularly interesting due to the specification of *positive* participation. The document seems to be stating that citizens are not only bound to participate within their society, but to participate in a positive manner. For a group of people attempting to act without interference from any outside parties, this is an extremely important inclusion. This specifies that it is not only a citizen’s duty to be an active member of his or her society, but that they must be cooperative citizens helping to further the goals of any officials in authority. It then goes on to state that the democratic society “demands that he exercise discrimination: that while he should commit an act of faith; that he distinguish between the necessity for tolerance and the necessity for just suppression” (NSC 23). The use of “just suppression” in this phrase produces an interesting effect. It poses an understanding that some suppression regarding the military endeavors this country was dealing with was “just” and necessary. When understanding the lengths officials went to in order to contain certain information related to this document and the military happenings that surrounded it, it seems that almost any form of suppression could be defended as “just”. The most interesting portion of this excerpt from *NSC 68* is the explanation that “A free society is vulnerable in that it is easy for people to lapse into excesses—the excesses of a permanently open mind” (NSC 23). After asserting that the enemy could be almost anyone and demanding suppression and secrecy, citizens are now posed with the threat of their own minds. If the drive towards paranoia, submission to authority, and conformity is not made clear in any other portion of the document, it is solidified here.

The only sure path to survival posed instructs one to obey authority and conform without questioning the circumstance being publicized. In this short phrase the writers of *NSC 68* were able to gather positive participation regarding their goals, suppress communication, and create distrust regarding the threat of an open mind. Promoting the idea that no one could be trusted, the authority of the government was able to align itself with the citizens as the only trustworthy entity that could ensure salvation. By suppressing the communication surrounding these circumstances it was less likely for interference to be spurred through discourse. Containing discussion was probably the most effective method of coercion that Nitze and his fellow committee members intentionally included within the document.

The conclusion of the document states, "The whole success of the proposed program hangs ultimately on recognition by this Government, the American people, and all free peoples, that the cold war is in fact a real war in which the survival of the free world is at stake" (*NSC 65*). Survival is a reoccurring theme throughout *NSC 68*. Whether or not Nitze and his committee intended it, it may have been one of the most effective elements of the entire document. The language used linking recognition and cooperation redefined the social contract upheld in America at that time. While a predominantly Christian nation had previously been concerned with avoiding the wrath of God by living a morally righteous life, they were now faced with the concept of an apocalypse brought on through war. Man was now able to end the world as well as God. The apocalyptic power had shifted. Moral actions were no longer the key to survival. Instead submission to the wishes of authority, or more specifically the government, was the only way to endure this apocalyptic atmosphere. Due to the fact that the very foundation of their values had been shaken American citizens were in a very vulnerable place. Unsure of what constituted the righteous path they became more

malleable to manipulation. They could no longer be assured of a path that was absolutely right. If this was indeed a nation under God and that nation was designating an evil enemy, then wasn't it right to cooperate in the destruction of that evil? Under this blurred distinction the nation was ushered into cooperation with a plan that allowed the weapons that threatened their very existence. Popular music from the era portrays the cultural confusion that was taking place. In a song released in 1950 entitled *Jesus Hits Like An Atom Bomb*, Lowell Blanchard and the Valley Trio sang about the culture's preoccupation with earthly perils rather than the Lord's salvation. This song was so popular that a gospel version was rereleased by The Pilgrim Travelers in 1951. The concerns of the song are revealed as the lyrics state, "Everybody's worried 'bout the atomic bomb, but nobody's worried 'bout the day my Lord will come" (*Jesus Hits Like An Atom Bomb*). The fact that this song was popular enough to be recorded two different times expresses the citizen's concerns regarding the depth of this problem within the American culture. The different genres of both country and gospel also demonstrate the variety of audiences concerned with this issue. This element of popular culture from that era proves that this shift in the social contract or covenant was a real source of distress for U.S. citizens.

When considering the idea of a "covenant" as presented by James Darsey, its appearance in the Old Testament is discussed as a reminder of the presence of God's will in the world. When describing the authority that a covenant carried Darsey states, "All power paled beside the supreme power of God, and no power was legitimate that was not in accordance with His will" (Darsey 20). The concept of a covenant shifted considerably throughout the course of time, and the American colonists followed suit adapting it to include their ideas and assumptions. The colonists viewed the covenant in relation to the ideas regarding political theory asserted by Thomas Hobbes. Darsey

explains that Hobbes viewed the natural state of life as being “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short” and “only by covenant, compact, or contract was there any hope of escape from this perdition” (Darsey 41). This perspective of covenant was manipulated throughout the course of America’s history as various authority figures used it in order to harness the supreme power of God’s will to further their specific cause. This tactic is clearly displayed throughout *NSC 68* as references are made to developing the moral strength of U.S. citizens. This is contrasted by descriptions of the Soviets rejecting moral considerations. Although the document attempted to combine its authority with the power related to God’s will it seems that as the apocalyptic nature of the surrounding situation became apparent those efforts were necessarily weakened. While Darsey poses a covenant as Hobbes’s source of escape from the brutish nature of man, *NSC 68* created a covenant that led to an atmosphere of fear and doom. By pairing their agenda with God’s will they projected their suggested path as being the correct path to salvation. When it became clear that this was not true, the covenant of American citizens suffered. This effect on the covenant was extremely problematic. Darsey describes a covenant as the values that define a people, as well as “the silent but acknowledged premise behind every judgment” (Darsey 20). If a covenant is the premise behind a civilization’s judgments then it would be what distinguished between absolute right and wrong. If the covenant suffers then the people’s concepts of right and wrong necessarily suffer as well. In this situation values are undefined, absolute right and wrong are inconceivable, and there is no known path to righteousness. It seems that this may indicate a period in which the covenant of the American people was in flux. The break from absolute reality this caused created an unsettled affect among American citizens. They were now able to understand that “reality” was not a set of fixed circumstances; however, they were now unsure which actions promised salvation. At this point manipulation of the U.S. public was reduced to simple instruction presented through scare tactics. The transition

in covenants created a mass of citizens searching for a promise or set of values to lead them to redemption. The need for guidance instilled a form of naïve acceptance and submission towards authority. Due to the extensive authority related to *NSC 68* as well as government officials in general, the public was left believing their assumption that the authorities instructing them were concerned with the nation's best interests, the well being of citizens, and the true path to redemption.

The propaganda set into motion by *NSC 68* produced citizens appropriate to the plans found within. The military expansion involved in the methods suggested by the document required that American's have positive feelings regarding the country and be unwilling to question decisions made by government authorities. A strict sense of conformity was essential to keeping interference regarding waging the Cold War to a minimum. With many people still doubting the reality of the threat the Soviets presented it was crucial to keep discussion restricted while releasing propaganda assuring audiences of the depth of this threat. Some of the most effective propaganda involved in this process was the films that were created for American citizens in order to desensitize them to the horrors of war. Films shown in classrooms across the country manipulated children into acceptance of a war with apocalyptic implications, as well as promoting conformity and submission and instructing against an inquisitive nature. These educational films provide us with a glimpse of how manipulative and misinformed the propaganda resulting from *NSC 68* was.

CHAPTER TWO: EDUCATIONAL FILMS

After issuing *NSC 68*, government officials had a serious need to push for compliance from citizens regarding the nuclear atmosphere that was rapidly developing. Having explicitly stated within the document that success of this program would rely on civilian recognition of the circumstances that the Cold War presented, the actions launched in response were referred to as “the largest domestic propaganda campaign to date in U.S. history” as late as 2008 (Masco 367). By late 1950 it had become clear that a committee was needed to focus on the civilian reaction towards possible emergencies. On January 21, 1951 President Truman approved the Federal Civil Defense Act of 1950, which in his words afforded “the basic framework for preparations to minimize the effects of an attack on our civilian population, and to deal with the immediate emergency conditions which such an attack would create” (Boyer and Cohen 11). In a report by the House Committee on Armed Services the fundamental purpose for the new law was summarized, stating “production capacity [of the bomb] depends utterly upon the community in which it thrives” (Boyer and Cohen 11). This reveals how desperate the government was to harness civilian support regarding the military industrial plans they were attempting to enact. They not only needed to coerce citizens into an unquestioning, submissive body, but they also needed to keep communities in the appropriate conditions for production. In order to proceed in developing the bomb and defending the country from the Cold War threat, they needed the support and manpower of calm, productive citizens. Joseph Masco notes that “the civil defense efforts involved town meetings and education programs in every public school; it also sought to take full advantage of mass media. . . particularly, film” (Masco 367). As the campaign pressed forward they relied much more heavily upon films. The success of the medium was

indisputable. They were shown in “schools, churches, community halls, and movie theaters” and by 1955 the FCDA claimed each picture would “be seen by a minimum of 20,000,000 persons” (Masco 367). The themes in these films varied, but most taught a strict lesson regarding conformity or submission. The goal of this propaganda was said to enforce “emotional self-regulation” seeking to “turn all Americans into docile bodies that would automatically support the goals of the security state” (Masco 367).

When considering the agenda of these films it is important to consider where this type of propaganda originated. At the time the FCDA began using film it was a fairly new medium. While it had not been used often and was not a familiar form of communication for citizens, it had been proven successful in previous movements. Masco describes the U.S. government’s use of film as “a means of installing a new normative reality within the United States, one that could consolidate political power at the federal level” (Masco 364). This use of film can be easily related to use by Nazi Germany in the early 1930s. In 1933 a film entitled *Hitlerjunge Quex* was made, glorifying the death of Herbert Norkus. Norkus was a fifteen-year-old boy stabbed to death on January 24, 1932. In the film Heini “wished to enter the clean and healthy ranks of the Hitler Youth” but was suspected of being a “communist infiltrator” (Lepage 88). Heini is said to be “tormented as any ‘good’ Nazi” would be and driven to take on a dangerous mission that costs him his life (Lepage 88). Through the glorification of a martyr, this film was directed at instilling the youth’s “spirit of sacrifice for Nazi ideals” (Lepage 88). Due to the fact that this propaganda was made during a time when the Nazi dictatorship was not solidly established it is easy to see how important fostering this willingness for sacrifice was. When comparing the Nazi use of film with that of the American government some interesting and frightening parallels are made obvious. There was a serious need to create a new reality that would be accepted by the civilians.

In both situations the authority in question needed citizens to be supportive of a situation that could cause an immeasurable number of deaths. In the case of the Cold War, they needed support of actions that had apocalyptic implications. Whether the repercussions would end in genocide or apocalypse it was clear that regulation of citizens would have to be approached in some form. Through various techniques these films allowed the authorities an opportunity to turn the unthinkable into “an opportunity for psychological self-management, civic responsibility, and ultimately, governance” (Masco 368). Through being repeatedly presented with the government sanctioned version of reality the conception of reality that viewers held was changed. From a Nietzschean perspective, due to the social agreement that the films’ presentation of life was *real* this became the accepted reality. The German success with this propaganda campaign was widely known, and less than a decade later the U.S. had begun using films to train soldiers cutting “training time by an average of thirty percent” (Soulter). Soon after films began being used to portray the front lines of war to American citizens in a very skewed way. Using images of planes soaring and impressive explosions dubbed over by a very soothing musical score, an image of glorified battle was depicted without the bloody horrors of reality. A process of desensitization towards war that Masco has referred to as “psychological reprogramming” was set into motion, and soon after similar films began to appear in the field of education (Masco 363). The parallels between Hitler’s use of films to provoke sacrifice for the Nazi party and the American government’s need to instill sacrifice for a war that presented apocalyptic consequences are extremely interesting when considering the messages being promoted.

It is important to understand that at the time of its arrival in the field of education, film was a very new medium. The majority of the American public was not yet familiar with this form of “moving visual information” (Forsdale 205). As Frank Smith, author of

Understanding Reading, explains, different genres or types of texts are referred to as schemes, and “knowledge of relevant schemes is obviously essential if we are to read any kind of text with comprehension” (Smith 15). Just as knowledge regarding the scheme is necessary in order to comprehend a text, it is also necessary in order to comprehend information presented in a film. Smith’s theories show that comprehension regarding these methods would have necessarily been hindered due to the fact that the American public was not yet accustomed to the medium of film. The books that had been used prior to the presence of these films allowed readers the power to flip back through pages, consider options, and develop opinions regarding the text. These films hindered that ability. With the equipment and films under the control of the authority running the projector the power of the viewers was restricted, their expectations were manipulated, and their comprehension was hindered.

The films designed for classroom use mostly revolved around social instruction or attitude building. Others involved survival techniques regarding the fear of bombs, communists, or outsiders and non-conformists in general. Masco states, “*NSC 68*...calls for a new campaign to discipline citizens for a life under the constant shadow of nuclear war,” and as mentioned previously, as “a means of installing a new normative reality within the United States” (Masco 364). In this statement he attributes films designed for citizens, including classroom films, directly to the NSC document. These films presented their audience with a depiction of life that normalized the event of nuclear war. By “turning the domestic space of the home into the front line of the Cold War” this propaganda “shifted responsibility for nuclear war from the state to its citizens by making public panic the enemy, not nuclear war itself” (Masco 366). While many of the films specifically focused on ideas like nuclear bombs or communists, most revolved around a specific manner of appropriate social conduct. The *right* way to behave did not include

the “public panic” described by Masco. While these films presented their content as innocent advice for the youth regarding how to fit into the social atmosphere they were maturing into, the underlying instructions promoted submission to authority, conformity, a lack of critical thinking, and a skewed concept of patriotism. It is also interesting to note that the methods used to present the information within these films involved various techniques that further reinforced the ideas being promoted. Charles Wolfe described a “documentary rhetoric” that brought “together images from diverse places and times, with the final guarantee of unity located in a disembodied voice-over, a voice-of-knowledge, the documentary Voice-of-God” (Wolfe 13). This omniscient position within films portrays an unquestionable authority, failing to promote any form of critical thought regarding the material being discussed. It designates the reality presented as Truth without stimulating any of the confrontation or hesitance that critical thinking would have produced. Providing solutions to the problems citizens were presented with, these narrators served as prophets issued by the producers. Darsey poses a prophet as one who offers solution and advice regarding the path to redemption. These narrators offered their audiences solutions for achieving salvation in an apocalyptic situation. This tactic demonstrates the extreme manipulation that was included in such a small element of the films. This may seem coincidental until considering the fact that one producer of these films, Edward C. Simmel, was a behavioral psychologist. His research focused on the human response to certain situations and he defined priming as a response that will occur in a given situation only if specific events took place previously. Aside from gaining a specific response, priming can have a chronic effect on one’s behavior producing what Simmel described as a personality change (Simmel 9). While Simmel clearly wasn’t responsible for the use of manipulative techniques in films he didn’t produce, it seems plausible that with a marketable product as profitable as the production of these films effective methods would be imitated frequently. It is obvious

how crucial research regarding priming would have been to the field of educational films and how effective it would have made the manipulation involved.

Some of the first films that surfaced in classroom curricula were presented as social instruction. These films conveyed messages involving fitting in, popularity, and appropriate social etiquette. In a 1947 film, *Shy Guy*, a young man is troubled by the fact that he doesn't fit in with his peers at school. The narrator begins by explaining that when unpopular you are left out of many activities. He goes on to describe that when unpopular "you can't forget that you're alone—an outsider," and as an outsider "you might have something to contribute to their conversations, but nobody cares whether you do or not" (*Shy Guy*). Within the first minute of the film the audience is not only assured that being an outsider and failing to conform is bad, but also that outsiders do not have the power to speak or be heard. The narrator explicitly explains that outsiders may have contributions but *nobody cares*. Later in the film the commandment of conformity is further solidified as the boy explains his troubles to his father. In order to make his point the father compares his son to machinery, a theme that will become important as this study progresses, explaining, "Maybe school is like your radio. This oscillator will do its work well, but as you said, you still have to fit it in so it can work with the other parts" (*Shy Guy*). After this comparison he goes on to suggest that his son "pick out the most popular boys and girls at school and keep an eye on them" (*Shy Guy*). Presented as "getting along" or "joining in," the larger social implications of this educational drive towards conformity were much more detrimental than they appeared. This may have been the most common message promoted among the genre of educational films.

The idea of machinery presented here has serious implications concerning the individuality of American citizens. With propaganda promoting conformity and

suggesting that people behave like machine parts, it is easy to see how this would have affected civilians. The value of organic and natural behavior was disregarded in favor of actions that resembled the repetition and imitation of machines. This drive towards submissive imitation of others promoted more than simply “fitting in” as the films suggested. Hidden behind the stated purpose of popularity, the message promoted the same ideas found in *NSC 68*. The American public needed to be made up of docile, unquestioning citizens in order for the government to operate as it wished. Without civilians impeding progress with concerns regarding the apocalyptic implications of *NSC 68*'s stated plan, they were free to do as they wished. For this reason it seems that the machine imagery used by these films was much more manipulative than it appeared when presented as social guidance. The use of machinery as a metaphor for the American way of life would appear repeatedly from this point on, both in favor of and in opposition to the behavior promoted by this propaganda.

Another film that promoted the same ideas was *Are You Popular?*, also produced in 1947. As the narrator begins addressing the audience he states, “Let’s watch and see what makes people like one person and not another” (*Are You Popular?*). The use of the word “let’s” is indicative of the inclusive discourse used throughout these films. Showing the audience a situation that they could loosely relate to and then constructing a “we” that they are addressed as, the films presented an inclusive group. While they may not have ever experienced a situation like those presented in the films, the use of rhetoric, camera angles, and first person plural narration puts the audience in a situation where they perceive themselves as part of the group being discussed. This film presented a group of white, upper or middle class students in a cafeteria discussing the popularity of their classmates. Again, it is the popular group that has the power to speak. The group depicted within the film has all the power of determining who is

popular and which actions produced that popularity. In both films the narrator is voiced as omniscient, adding God-like authority to his position. Taking advantage of the authority that the omniscience provided, the narrator goes on to present situations to the audience, pose questions regarding those situations, and then provide answers for the questions without allowing any time for reflection. This process directly hinders the concept of comprehension conveyed by Frank Smith in *Understanding Reading*. He explains that it is relative and “depends on getting answers to the questions being asked” (Smith 170). Smith goes on to express that being asked questions that a teacher or authority assigns will only help one to understand the meaning of the work from their point of view. He suggests that readers should be wary and “should not only be pursuing certain pathways of ideas for their own particular ends...they should *constantly be on guard against having their expectations entirely controlled by the author’s arguments*” [Emphasis added.] (Smith 174). By posing questions and answering them at the fast pace film provided, the viewer’s attention and expectations were constricted to what the authors or producers intended. Through this method, viewers would create habits of processing information while being directed toward appropriate questions and expectations. Smith states, “if we are generally not disposed to think critically in particular circumstances, or if we do not feel we have the authority to think critically about what certain ‘experts’ are asserting, then we are unlikely to think critically when we read” (Smith 181). It is easy to see how the experts presented within these films would make viewers feel that they did not possess the authority to think critically or provide input regarding the topics presented. While the messages being presented seemed to be innocent instruction regarding the social life of a teenager, the underlying ideas involved which groups held the power and authority and who had the authority to answer and pose questions. The films were also able to depict their messages in such a way that viewers were never prompted to question ideas they came into contact with or

develop skills regarding critical thought. With ideas being presented as absolutes there was no reason to. Instead they portrayed a situation that everyone was supposed to relate to, and if not you were an outsider. As Elizabeth Ellsworth explains in "I Pledge Allegiance: The Politics of Reading and Using Educational Films," "educational documentaries encourage students to accept particular ways of making sense of the world that also support and legitimize that norm...In fact it is a mythical norm, since no individual person will 'fit' in perfectly or unproblematically and few will actually embody all of the traits associated with it" (Ellsworth 52). By failing to provoke critical thought regarding the state of one's environment and then presenting a reality that few could relate to, students were given the impression that their experiences did not give them the authority to ask questions or make decisions regarding their world.

Another film made in 1954 entitled *The Griper* displayed the fate of those who did not follow the suggestions other films made regarding "fitting in." Within this film two teens, George and Betty, are compared as they go through their daily activities. As George's conscience begins to narrate the story the audience sees that George is a notorious griper who comes from a family sharing similar habits. The narrator goes on to discuss George's disposition and compare his actions to those of his classmate Betty. Their peers are observed discussing how much fun Betty is in contrast to George, who is described as a "wet blanket" (*The Griper*). The affect that George's behavior has on those who surround him is the focus of the conversation. No one is fond of his temperament or wants to be around him. This film demonstrates that a lack of conformity simply isn't socially acceptable. The message expressed is that if one acts disagreeably and is not in favor of the circumstances which they inhabit then they will be disliked, shunned, and should be aware that their behavior is wrong. More extreme films that warned against independent thinking demonstrated how through a lack of

conformity many teens fell into dangerous behavior. Drinking and driving, drugs, vandalism, and general acts of delinquency were often portrayed as a result of unpopularity. In one of the most bizarre films of this type, *Age 13*, a young boy whose mother has died is described as “confused” (Smith 43). He eventually pulls a gun on his classmates, seemingly the product of his failure to fit into the crowd. The connection made between a situation where a teen is unpopular and one where a boy has lost his mother demonstrated to viewers that no matter what the reason, nonconformity was an unacceptable manner of behavior. This provided students with visual images to embody the idea that voicing disagreement was a social crime and solidified the suggestion to fit in.

In contrast to these films which demonstrate the fate of those refusing to conform or fit in, others depicted the success of a life heeding the instructions being given. One film made in 1950, *A Date With Your Family*, presented one of the most skewed representations of reality seen in any film of this genre. Within this film the notion of family life is portrayed as being overly formal and completely void of conflict. The role of each family member is clearly laid out in a very static manner, leaving no room for deviation. This was the right way to act and any distance from this was perceived as being wrong and disagreeable. Gender roles portrayed in this film are as black and white as possible. As the two oldest children get home from school for the day they quickly begin to exemplify the actions that the film deems appropriate behavior. “Daughter” changes into clothes that make her “feel and consequently look more charming” as she begins to set the table for dinner (*A Date With Your Family*). “Mother” is also shown knitting, as the narrator explains that she too has changed clothes due to the fact that “the women of this family seem to feel that they owe it to the men of the family to look relaxed, rested, and attractive at dinner” (*A Date With Your Family*). In

contrast, “Brother” takes an hour before dinner to do his homework, obviously conveying the idea that men need to do important work while women do the house work, and then helps “Junior” as they both change for dinner. “Father” then arrives home from work with “important contracts” in his briefcase and the narrator expresses that before he does this work “he will relax at dinner with those he loves” (*A Date With Your Family*). It seems important to note the narrator’s explanation that “Father” will “relax at dinner” while “Mother” and “Sister” only “look relaxed,” feeling that they owe that to the men (*A Date With Your Family*). The father comes in and sits on the couch as the two boys come to visit with him. At this point the narrator tells the audience, “these boys greet their dad as if they are genuinely glad to see him. . .this is the time for pleasant discussion. . .they don’t pick this time of day to spring unpleasant surprises on Dad” (*A Date With Your Family*). As it is easy to see, throughout this film every member of the family has a role which they either fulfill or do not in a very black and white sense. Gender roles were oppressively imposed and teenage girls making up the audience were trained to be seen and not heard, owing it to men to look nice all the while. The women in the film were rarely shown speaking, and their accomplishments were disregarded as minimal. Men on the other hand were displayed as authority figures that were not to be questioned. In making the statement that children should not bother their fathers with disagreeable information the narrator is shaping a perception of authority that is related to intimidation and submission. Rather than presenting the father as being open and available to his children when they needed to talk to him, he was instead portrayed as being unapproachable. This gave viewers the impression that authority figures were not to be bothered with questions and problems coming from their children, or the citizens they governed when viewed politically. This promoted an impression of reality where “normal” people did not have problems, and if they did they certainly would not discuss them. America’s youth had *seen* the fate of those who did not follow the prescribed

methods of living expressed in these films. With fear instilled deep within their psyches they would never expose themselves to the dangers that loomed as a result. Through the application of films like this one an entire generation was lulled into submission. They were under the power of any entity they saw as having authority over them and were now afraid to express any emotion other than accordance.

Another film that displays the benefits of following the instructions of authority is the 1957 production, *Social Class in America*. This plot depicts the lives of three different men from the time they are infants until they reach maturity. The focus is on the fact that they all come from different social classes, but due to an American's ability of "vertical mobility" they are free to move amongst classes (*Social Class in America*). As the audience's attention is drawn towards the middle-class citizen, Theodore Eastwood the narrator again demonstrates omniscience recalling one of Theodore's own memories. In order to solidify how unappealing and restrictive his middle-class status was, the narrator repeats what a date once said to Theodore, explaining to him the problem wasn't just money, but that they lived in "two different worlds" (*Social Class in America*). After a series of direct questions the narrator then offers a solution. The voice tells Theodore that "there are other worlds, bigger towns. Go to New York. Give it a try for six months. And if you fail...only, you're not going to fail" (*Social Class in America*). The audience is shown that Theodore gained the knowledge needed to solve his problem as he responds by changing his body language. He quickens his pace, shifts his gaze from downward up towards the sky, and broadens his shoulders as he continues to stroll down the street. An explanation from the narrator is then given, presenting a dramatic shift into past tense. The use of past tense is an interesting rhetorical technique giving the impression that the suggested solution worked, proving there was no need to question the method. As the narrator had explained, there was no

room for failure with a solution so absolute. The audience is not told that there is immense room for error in this scenario, or that there may be more than one way to achieve the set goal. The reality depicted is presented as absolute, without room for any variance. The suggestions given are meant to be believed as the one Truth, and applied to real life situations without question. The rhetorical methods within this film not only fostered submission to an all-knowing authority and promoted the work force as a means of mobilizing one's social class, but they also presented visual examples of an absolute reality presented as the norm in American life.

Another film that solidified the idea of absolute reality and may have taken advantage of authority more than any other film of the genre was *Control Your Emotions*. As this film opens the "documentary Voice-of-God" described by Wolfe begins to address the audience regarding the dangers of emotions. He explains that, "Before men learned how to control fire and put it to work it was man's greatest enemy. In much the same way your emotions can be your own greatest enemy" (*Control Your Emotions*). This statement serves to inform students that their own emotions pose them with a serious threat. He goes on to say, "I think of fire in connection with emotions because when you become stirred up, when your emotions control your actions, it affects not only yourself but the people around you" (*Control Your Emotions*). Allowing children to understand that their emotions posed a problem in social situations, they were able to present this message, crucial to the ideas found in NSC 68, in a harmless manner. An "expert" in a white lab coat sitting at a desk with a diploma in the background then begins to describe basic human emotions to the audience. As he explains, "Psychologists find that control of emotions can be gained by understanding the stimulus-response pattern," the audience is given the impression that he is a medical expert regarding psychology (*Control Your Emotions*). The manipulation involved in the

“expert” is taken a step further as the camera pans to reveal pictures of what viewers can only presume to be a wife and daughter framed on the wall, providing the ethos of a family man. The instruction regarding controlling emotion within this film has serious implications when paired with the ideas found in *NSC 68*. This emotional regulation helped to promote a mindset among citizens that allowed them to confront the fear related to a nuclear crisis with a muted response, rather than hysteria or panic. This film may have been one of the most effective in securing the appropriate mindset for the success of the actions suggested in *NSC 68*.

Aside from those providing advice and social guidance, films offering advice posed as being essential for survival were also presented in a classroom atmosphere. These may have been some of the most manipulative ever made. They served as “acts of immersion,” desensitizing citizens to the horrors of war through repeated contact with the material (Lardas 4). A film entitled *Duck and Cover* discussed the prescribed actions when under a nuclear attack. While adults were being desensitized by scenes of the frontlines, schools began to show films that would do the same for the youth of the country. In 1951 with the looming threat of nuclear bombs hovering over America, what would become one of the most widely known educational films ever produced was put into circulation. The youth of the United States were now being immersed into an atmosphere where the threat of annihilation was ever present, under instruction that this should be received with a docile reaction rather than panic. Students were told that if a nuclear explosion were to occur that they should duck under a desk or table and cover their heads. This extremely ridiculous method could have only been designed to make people think that they were safe, simply serving to keep them calm. The government needed a way to keep citizens emotionally stable in the face of this monumental threat. If they were not desensitized to the dangers of the bomb, they would not be able to

operate in a social situation. Further, the immobilizing fear produced by an apocalyptic threat would have necessarily limited production in the U.S., giving bureaucrats a crucial need to manage the resulting emotions. It is clear that this film used “the power of mass media to transform nuclear attack from unthinkable apocalypse into an opportunity for psychological self-management, civic responsibility, and ultimately, governance” (Masco 368). The amount of information regarding the aftermath of a bomb that was withheld in this film demonstrates the level of manipulation that was present. Given that this film was made six years after the bombing of Hiroshima it is obvious that producers were well aware of the inaccuracy of the information they were portraying as essential to survival. It seems particularly relevant to mention that this film was depicted through cartoon drawings, helping producers hide the actual effects of a nuclear bombing. Bert the Turtle, the character depicted as surviving the explosion, is shown retreating into his shell for safety. The reality of the fact that a turtle would be annihilated in the wake of a nuclear blast is completely ignored. The children making up the audience are simply told that by taking cover they will be protected from the blast. As the cartoon image shifts to a classroom setting a man is shown explaining, “We all know the atomic bomb is very dangerous. Since it may be used against us we must get ready for it *just as we are ready for many other dangers that are around us all the time*” [Emphasis added.] (*Duck and Cover*). This demonstrates Masco’s explanation of “social-engineering” projects designed to “teach citizens a specific kind of nuclear fear while normalizing the nuclear crisis” (Masco 367). While the audience of this film was instructed to fear the danger of a nuclear attack, it also instructed them to confront this fear in the same way that they confronted any other danger that was present in their daily lives. This instruction is given concrete meaning as the danger of an atomic bomb is then related to fire or traffic. As if this comparison doesn’t completely fail to depict the depth of the horrors an atomic blast presents, the narrator then goes on to describe what could

happen in the event of an explosion. He explains, "There is a bright flash: brighter than the sun, brighter than anything you've ever seen. If you are not ready and do not know what to do it could hurt you in different ways. It could knock you down hard, or throw you against a tree or a wall. It is such a big explosion it can smash in buildings and knock sign boards over and break windows all over town, but if you duck and cover like Bert you will be much safer" (*Duck and Cover*). Again, this insistence that ducking under a desk and covering your head will protect you when faced with an explosion that could smash in buildings seems rather naïve, regardless of the fact that this description of nuclear devastation is an immense understatement. The film goes on to explain several other dangers of nuclear explosions such as the fate of being burnt worse than "a terrible sunburn" (*Duck and Cover*). It is obvious when viewing this film that this was an effort to create a functioning fear among citizens that would allow them to continue prospering and not instill the paralyzing effect that realistic reports regarding nuclear disasters would have created.

The last message within these films that seems particularly relevant to the ideas presented within *NSC 68* revolves around industry and production in America. Due to the fact that military build-up depended heavily upon the production capacity of U.S. industries, these films motivated students to become part of the workforce. They may demonstrate more clearly than any other the attempts made to fulfill the stated purpose of the Federal Civil Defense Act. The House Committee on Armed Services reduced the reasons behind instructions regarding social life and emotional well-being to a need to keep communities thriving. As mentioned previously, they stated that the fundamental purpose of a committee appointed to handle civilian reactions to a nuclear crisis revolved around the fact that "production capacity depends utterly upon the community in which it thrives" (Boyer and Cohen 11). While other films being made advocated values and

social reactions that were intended to fill communities with thriving citizens, these targeted the citizen's role in the system of production and industry. As stated in NSC 68, the industrial strength of the U.S. was essential in order to achieve the level of military power desired. For this reason, films promoting the work force were necessary in order to keep a steady stream of workers available. By glorifying industry within classroom films, young viewers were given the impression that it was their patriotic duty to join the work force and help the country. One film produced in 1948, *What Is Business?*, displays the difference in lifestyles that industry affords. The narrator explains the need for businesses within our society, contrasting a downtown strip of shops to a Native American woman grinding corn with a rock. Through this method the audience is given the impression that without businesses, we too would be using rudimentary methods to fulfill our most basic needs. The audience is told that business is "any enterprise that is organized to satisfy our needs for goods and services" and provide us with "comfort and safety" (*What Is Business?*). This prompts the audience to understand that if they work for America they will remain safe from the bomb. If this "comfort and safety" were "taken away," the narrator explains that we would "suddenly" be required to "produce our own food, make our own clothes, build our own homes" (*What Is Business?*). Then displaying the screen shot of the woman grinding corn on rocks, the audience is told that without business "it would mean living like this" (*What Is Business?*). Posed as the element that binds people together and allows collaboration, the narrator explains that without "business, organizer of cooperative effort among people and creator of elaborate machinery and equipment which is responsible for the comfortable life we live today" we would have to accomplish the tasks necessary for that comfort "single-handedly" (*What Is Business?*). As the film goes on men and women in factories are discussed as being a necessary step in the provision of goods and comfort. Every step of the production chain is described as an "important link," serving to promote viewers to become a part of

this system (*What Is Business?*). The importance of this process could not be denied after the facts in this film were presented. Industry is posed as the only enterprise allowing Americans to cooperate, working together to accomplish “truly vital services provided by businesses” (*What Is Business?*). Through the messages presented in this film the strength of the drive towards the work force is clear. The nation was in need of a work force to increase production and facilitate the process of military build-up that NSC 68 deemed as a necessity. Through the use of these films a young audience was targeted and ushered directly from a classroom where these films were shown to a factory or store where the messages were applied.

Throughout these films an underlying drive towards conformity and submission to authority is ever-present. While messages regarding social instruction and popularity may disguise the intended purpose, the manipulation involved is not hard to recognize. These methods allowed producers to project a reality in which the threat of nuclear attack was not something that should invoke an emotional reaction. Instead, good citizens should take this danger in stride reacting calmly and behaving in the socially accepted way demonstrated throughout these films. NSC 68 described a situation where it was necessary for citizens to be cooperative, unquestioning, and accepting regarding the wishes of authorities or government officials. By teaching young viewers to strive to “fit in” and go with the suggested course of action described by an authority, a group of conforming, submissive citizens who failed to think critically about actions was born. These citizens blindly submitted themselves to the ultimate sacrifice for authority, “patriotically” allowing experimentation with apocalyptic weapons without question. In this action the break from the original covenant can be clearly observed. A community founded upon values protecting them from apocalyptic doom was manipulated into

standing by as they were told the end of civilization was nothing that should produce panic.

Due to this dissolution of the original covenant, a break from absolute reality was also prompted. The abandonment of a concept of "Truth" was extremely detrimental to the processes NSC 68 initiated. Without absolute ideas of what was right or wrong, good or evil, ally or enemy, the whole idea of the Cold War became flimsy. It was crucial that American citizens held strong convictions regarding the fact that the U.S. was fighting against evil enemies to secure safety and freedom for the good of the world. If those ideas began to fall apart, support for the military actions regarding the Cold War would quickly fade. In order to reinforce the concept of absolute reality in America actions were necessary. The educational films discussed here helped promote the idea of Truth as much as any other. Through the construction of a reality where variance was not present, the use of an all-knowing authority who held *the* answer, and a very strict presentation of what was right and wrong, viewers were led to believe that there was a Truth and a right way of living. These attempts were problematic due to the fact that absolute reality was being instilled in an environment where the dangers of daily life were provoking critical thought. Daily life presented situations that threatened one's survival. Man was now able to inflict apocalypse upon the world. How could one not question the events taking place and how they affected one's life, or civilization in general?

This struggle between logic regarding the ideas presented by the government and the lurking deception regarding those ideas caused an atmosphere of unrest among American citizens. People were beginning to consider that the instructions they were being given regarding their survival may not have been coming from the most reliable sources. When considering the fact that these instructions were coming from the same

people promoting a bomb with apocalyptic repercussions they seem much less compelling. A suspicion that government officials may not have had the citizen's best interests in mind eventually began to circulate among citizens, although fears of becoming an outsider kept them from being communicated. By this time being an outsider and not fitting in had become more than a warning issued in a classroom film. Communists had been identified as the most dangerous enemy and they had infiltrated our country. In *NSC 68*, popular films, and other propaganda, the threat that the Soviets presented was explained as a desire to end American civilization as a whole. Communists were portrayed as the biggest threat to American citizens, allowing the government to instill distrust regarding specific people and not simply the Soviet Union as a whole. Disguised as average citizens, and even government officials as McCarthy "proved," they had infiltrated the country and were corrupting the values America was founded upon. With the threat of these individuals lurking about communities undetected, everyone was under suspicion. The House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) held numerous trials and McCarthy's threats, combined with the media attention that fueled them, led to the anti-communist "witch-hunt" and persecution of innocent citizens. Regardless of the failure to provide evidence or logical reasoning, these methods were carried out due to the fear inspired by them until McCarthy's censorship by the U.S. Senate in 1954 (Fried 171). Revealing doubt regarding the government demonstrated a lack of "patriotism" in the sense it had been portrayed in propaganda. For this reason those voicing a doubt in America were condemned as being communists. This obsession with communist infiltration soon expanded to warrant accusations of anyone refusing to conform to accepted social standards. Homosexuals, avant-garde artists, and those expressing radical thought were in constant danger of being designated as a communist and charged accordingly, or diagnosed as being mentally insane and confined to treatment in an asylum. The break from absolute reality

taking place paired with the oppression forcing conformity and submission to authorities made this the perfect time for a drastic change in social values. While the time may have been appropriate for a crucial shift in the community, the danger and radical nature involved in the actions necessary to achieve this change required a very specific approach to the situation.

CHAPTER 3: ALLEN GINSBERG

The messages promoted in the educational films discussed previously presented a very restrictive perspective concerning the appropriate way to live one's life. They promoted a very black and white concept of good versus evil and prescribed a way of living that encompassed that concept. Roles of family members and citizens were laid out in a very strict way, conveying the message that behavior which strayed from these actions was wrong and would lead to being outcast by society. The conformity and submission demonstrated, paired with lessons on controlling one's emotions, presented a method of action that held very little room for a personal identity. Students were confronted with the idea that their opinions and experiences held no authority. Instruction regarding how to interact with an authority figure, allowed them to fully understand that they were in no place to question the information they were provided with. The lessons found within these films, and throughout *NSC 68*, were extremely detrimental to the circulation of knowledge, as well as the value of one's personal identity. In order to counter these claims regarding good and evil, many literary figures began to speak out. The approach necessary to curb the rampant conformity at that time was found in a very honest and open form of literature. Due to the fact that McCarthyism and the Red Scare had begun to die down in the early 50s, a small space to speak had been achieved although it came at the price of severe persecution. This allowed a few people within the country to grasp this opportunity to express their ideas and experiences, hoping that others would hear the message they were spreading. This presented those feeling connected to the counter cultural movement with the ability to provide others identifying with their cause with a path out of the chaos. They presented their ideas as the way to achieve salvation and escape the persecution that the

American society projected upon them. This ability to demonstrate the true covenant and path to redemption made the literary figures in question extremely radical figures in this country's history.

James Darsey's concept of a prophet reveals that these radical individuals were illuminating an alternate reality for those who heard them. Stating the "prophet's claim is based on personal revelation and charisma," he explains, the prophet "posits sacred judgment, replicating the original ordering of creation by God" (Darsey 24,32).

Understanding that many had strayed from the path that would lead to their salvation, these prophets sought to help them see the appropriate way of life. This distance between the prophet's advice and the more popular path they were warning against, led them into the face of persecution. They were often viewed as insane if not simply radical, and Darsey notes that "the severity of the prophets judgment must not be confused with hysteria" (Darsey 21). It is the nature of their message to refute the status quo. This idea of a prophet helps one grasp Allen Ginsberg's poetry, as well as the radical ideas presented in an interesting way. During the obscenity trials revolving around his poem *Howl*, Kenneth Rexroth stated, ". . .the simplest term for such writing is prophetic. . .and that the possibility of salvation in this terrible situation which he reveals is through love and through the love of everything Holy in man" (Morgan and Peters 165,166). When his opinions are considered prophetic his madness becomes understandable. In attempting to change the path accepted as appropriate by society, prophets are necessarily considered mad in many situations. Darsey reveals that "It is precisely because the prophet engages his society over its most central and fundamental values that he is radical" (Darsey 20). Along with this comes the idea that prophets cannot be rational, as Darsey quotes Egon Bittner explaining, "pure radical thought and action is devoid of practical wisdom, of sensitivity to the occasion, of

opportunistic economizing, of the capacity to learn from experiences, of flexibility and looseness of interest. In sum, it lacks that bargaining side of intelligence that characterizes the conduct and thinking of 'reasonable' persons" (Darsey 21). This description of a radical and somewhat irrational person embodies the historical figures who broke the oppressive silence through the use of shocking rhetoric, and has interesting implications when paired with Ginsberg's concept of madness. Prophets were forced to share their message despite persecution, due to the strength of their convictions. Darsey describes the martyrdom of the prophet as his willingness to suffer for his message. This strengthens the ethos in a crucial way. If one is willing to endure extreme harassment to express his or her message it demonstrates the depth of their commitment.

Darsey poses the idea that poetry has had prophetic qualities throughout history. Understanding that the knowledge the poet possesses is crucial to the enlightenment of man, "the poet's purpose as a serious writer was not primarily to please, but to enlighten the public and to expand its consciousness" (Darsey 159). When considering this description of a prophet it seems clear that the historical figures breaking the oppression were operating prophetically. One group of artists fulfilling this description came to be known as the Beat Generation. Members included William Burroughs, Lucien Carr, Allen Ginsberg, Herbert Huncke, and Jack Kerouac. Despite the persecution they encountered when voicing their opinions, they continued. This was their way of allowing others to see that another path was available. Darsey quotes Northrop Frye as saying that the poet feels that "his calling as a poet is a dedication, a total way of life, and that a commitment to it has an importance to society beyond poetry itself" (Darsey 159). This importance is found in the truth of the message and the redemption that it makes possible. This description of a prophet coincides with the term "beat" coined by Huncke.

Although the meaning came to be twisted endlessly, Kerouac always insisted that it had never referred to “juvenile delinquents,” but instead “characters of a special spirituality who didn’t gang up but were solitary Bartlebies staring out the dead wall window of our civilization” (Charters xviii). The impression of these people as being delinquents was perpetuated by their affiliations with lifestyles that were unfavorable at that time. Allen Ginsberg had ties to communist organizations, was homosexual, participated in recreational drug use, and was sentenced to an asylum as a result of a criminal conviction. Jack Kerouac also enjoyed drug use, participated in illicit sexual activities, and refused to accept the social responsibilities of an adult, such as those expressed in the educational films discussed. William Burroughs was a known drug addict, Herbert Huncke was a convicted thief, and Lucien Carr was a murderer. It is obvious why these men were not considered sacred given the accepted social concepts of that time. Their distance from conventional behavior caused them to be referred to as “Beatniks,” in the media’s attempt to create a link to the Russian satellite, Sputnik. This rhetorical maneuver caused the Beats to be portrayed as communists, provoking their persecution in a country where it was common knowledge that communists presented the largest threat to national security. While the media consistently propagated their own degrading definitions of “beat,” original members of the generation, especially Kerouac, were insistent “that the word possessed deeper allusive qualities and meant something mysterious and spiritual” (Charters xviii). This spiritual nature reveals the depth of conviction that these artists held regarding the topics they addressed. They were revealing truths that they found to be central to human existence and individuality. As William Carlos Williams wrote in his introduction to *Howl*, “We are blind and live our blind lives out in blindness. Poets are damned but they are not blind, they see with the eyes of angels” (Ginsberg 8). Through this relationship with their message they conveyed a covenant. Jack Kerouac embraced this idea of the path these artists illuminated for the

world. In his novel *On the Road*, he refers to the character portraying Neal Cassady directly as a prophet, writing, “. . .in their eyes I would be strange and ragged and like the Prophet who has walked across the land to bring the dark Word, and the only Word I had was ‘Wow!’” (Kerouac 35). Due to the fact that the covenant had been pushed into an area of dissolution through the development of nuclear weapons and the shift of apocalyptic power, these artists were able to relay their impressions of what was sacred without being hindered by the ideas of religious organizations or authorities at that time. It seems the word “Wow!,” which Kerouac describes as the only word the character had, may allude to the idea that the “land” was sacred. The holy nature of the organic was often depicted through Beat literature, posed against the lifeless industry that this country regarded so highly.

The effect of nuclear warfare on the values of the nation allowed space for this generation of artists to express a message that would have otherwise been unacceptable. As Ginsberg stated, “The absoluteness of the bomb, the absolute power, evoked an absoluteness of inquiry into the nature of consciousness” (*Gang of Souls*). This inquiry led Americans to begin questioning the values that had been promoted through propaganda, including educational films. For many this led to an intense unrest with the state of their society. Through expressing frustration with the state of values in America they identified with a group seeking to make changes and they shared a message of redemption with them.

Allen Ginsberg later recalled that the original meaning for the term “beat” was slang for “exhausted, at the bottom of the world, looking up or out, sleepless, wide-eyed, perceptive, rejected by society, on your own, streetwise” (Charters xviii). It is clear from this description alone how drastically the atmosphere of the era affected these artists. As Luther Nichols stated as he testified in *Howl's* obscenity hearing, the “younger

liberals. . .The post- World War II generation: those who returned, went into college or went into work immediately after World War II were perhaps somewhat displaced by the chaos of the war and didn't immediately settle down" (Morgan and Peters 146). Feeling that they had been rejected by society and the norms it demanded, they began to strive for a different lifestyle despite the persecution they encountered. The experiences they had shared included crucial changes in the American way of life, which as Ginsberg explained "had something to do with the explosion of the bomb and some alteration of the Earth's atmosphere" (*Gang of Souls*). From the atomic bomb to the Cold War and the rampant anti-Communism it brought with it, these writers shared a common disgust with the state of society and its values. Members of the Beat Generation created art that revealed the problems within the culture and the ability to act against them. Serving as spokesmen for a counter cultural group that had been denied the space to speak, these writers exposed the reality that existed behind the imposed conformity.

While it would have been impossible for their messages to be publicized in the years prior to their emergence, the Red Scare had begun to die down by the mid-fifties. While Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy had spread a surge of fear regarding communists through America, his reign did not last long. His practices caused the most extreme displays of anti-communism to become synonymous with the term "McCarthyism," and were often referred to as "witch-hunts" persecuting innocent citizens. Due to his failure to provide evidence or logical reasoning, his methods were censored by the U.S. Senate in 1954 (Fried 171). While this terror provoked by McCarthy may have only lasted four years, the effect it had on the country's atmosphere was crucial. Citizens' fear of being labeled as a communist was extremely powerful due to the repercussions of such an accusation. The fear of being blacklisted caused the American public to act in a very careful and fearful manner. Those who were blacklisted

would not be hired, and often they would be exiled altogether (Fried 155). In this situation, where the average citizen was fearful of such accusations, teachers, artists, and entertainers were in even more danger. Members of these groups were particularly suspicious to government officials, triggering worries that they may be speaking against the prescribed norms or spurring left wing ideas. Ellen Schrecker, author of *No Ivory Tower*, explains, “simply being controversial could be a problem...Though the FBI was obsessed with keeping its activities camouflaged, it was willing to go to considerable lengths ‘in the interest of keeping undesirable characters out of the education field’” (Schrecker 274, 277). Further, many employers did not wait for HUAC’s ruling but instead “rushed to impose sanctions...sometimes without waiting for the official machinery to run its course” (Schrecker 9). In response to this threat writers conformed, and teachers and critics warned students that this was no time for innovation or radicalism (Raskin 5). With art and thought stifled it was almost impossible to express or discuss any new ideas. This “rampant anti-communism,” was said to have “narrowed the range of selection open to associations, utterances, and ideas” (Fried 164). In effect, anti-communism was inhibiting the production of knowledge and, therefore, stunting the intellectual growth of the culture. Those producing radically new knowledge were identified as being either insane or communist and were subject to severe consequences. The constraints on citizens due to the fear inflicted upon them were extremely detrimental to the momentum of various counter cultural movements during the time. The prevalent political conservatism and its insistence upon adherence to prescribed norms created a sort of barrier against progressive movements. Those fighting for black, female, and gay rights all suffered greatly, and groups promoting peace were also denounced as being communists, or communist-sympathizers. This left no room for artists, such as those of the Beat Generation, to express their opinions. None of those who sought to challenge the status quo could achieve the power to be

heard. They were discredited, viewed as being un-American, and persecuted for fighting to secure the equality which Americans hold so dear. Because of this perspective, the struggles of counter cultures including the Beat movement were met with opposition, injustice, and often violence.

According to Richard Fried in his book *Nightmare in Red: The McCarthy Era in Perspective*, one example of the extreme injustices inflicted upon these groups was the treatment of homosexuals, seen as being internally weak and vulnerable to manipulation and blackmail. This persecution is embedded throughout their literature due to the fact that many members of the Beat Generation were involved in homosexual lifestyles. During the late 1940s, gay and lesbian bars were under the surveillance of the FBI and were frequented by local police forces. Workers at post offices also monitored subscriptions received, reporting the recipients of questionable material as being homosexual. From 1947 on, it is estimated that about five homosexuals per month were fired from federal jobs in the US. This rate rose to sixty per month in February of 1950, after an official's testimony that most of ninety-one people recently fired from the State Department for moral reasons were homosexuals (Fried 167). This increasing government attention to homosexuality threatened to make it a political issue in 1950. Disagreeing with the social stigma placed upon these acts which their experiences had told them were not wrong, these writers spoke out. They expressed the idea that these acts, considered to be illicit and shameful, were simply an element of humanity and therefore something beautiful. By portraying the reality of a situation that had been deemed horrific by the media, these writers were able to display a very different path.

It is easy to draw parallels between the social norms being promoted by authorities and the offences designating one as a communist. Basically any failure to adhere to the "socially acceptable" manner of that time was reason to believe one was a

communist. If one refused to follow the rules discussed in both *NSC 68* and the educational films mentioned previously, they were obviously under communist influence. American citizens had been instructed to fit in, follow along without question, and be submissive toward authority. If they failed to follow those instructions the repercussions had become more serious than ever. While they may have started out as mere classroom lessons, these ideas had become essential to survival in Cold War America. The stakes had been raised and now failure to comply with conformity and submission was not only looked down upon or viewed as the cause of delinquency; it was a punishable crime. The only explanations remaining for citizens exhibiting any hint of individuality were communism and insanity. The refusal to conform to society's expectations was met with strong opposition. In this volatile atmosphere it is easy to see why Beat poetry had such an impact. In a culture where individuality had been criminalized, these poets were revealing a forbidden path. Through their work they conveyed a message that the individual was a sacred thing and conscious thought was the necessary means to that end. Simple submission and conformity to authority without critical thought concerning prescribed actions would not lead one to salvation, and the Beats were spreading that message.

Allen Ginsberg was raised in an environment that instilled ideas which became fundamental to his poetry. He was born June 3, 1926 to Louis and Naomi Ginsberg who were both second generation Russian-Jewish immigrants. His father, Louis, was a high school teacher and poet and no doubt contributed greatly to his son's love of writing. Naomi was a member of the Communist party during the Depression and suffered from serious mental illness resulting in multiple nervous breakdowns. She was institutionalized as a result of being diagnosed with paranoia and was later lobotomized. She spent the rest of her life in an asylum, dying in the Pilgrim State Hospital on Long Island in June 1956 (Charters 61). As a young child Allen had been taken along as his

mother attended communist rallies, and he had fond memories of the experiences. These memories, along with his mother's insanity, clearly led him to focus on the particular topics discussed throughout his work. Realizing from a young age that communists, insanity, and social values were not being projected truthfully to the American public, Ginsberg became increasingly frustrated with the state of affairs in this country. He struggled with his own homosexuality, his mother's mental illness, and a desire for an unconventional lifestyle throughout his life. In 1948 after having an auditory hallucination of William Blake reading "Ah, Sunflower," he dedicated his life to poetry. While this may have been the moment that Ginsberg realized his true calling, he noted that New York restricted him from expressing himself freely. In 1949 Ginsberg was sentenced to New York State Psychiatric Institute as punishment for allowing Herbert Huncke and his associates to store stolen goods in his apartment (Raskin 88). From July 1949 until March 1950 he underwent psychiatric counseling and became well acquainted with Carl Solomon, who shared similar ideas regarding realities, social oppression, and political ideas. Solomon is described by Jonah Raskin as, "a Bronx-born Jewish intellectual, a bisexual, and a part-time communist, Dadaist, and existentialist" (Raskin 97). "He was a hipster intellectual—a man with a brilliant mind who was also mad" and Ginsberg identified with and responded to that (Raskin 97). His influence led Ginsberg to become acquainted with diverse artists. Solomon directed Ginsberg towards accepting Sartre's proposition that "it was crucial to reject both the United States and the Soviet Union" (Raskin 97). Reacting to the ideas that he was coming into contact with, Ginsberg began taking notes for a poem regarding the similarities between America and Russia (Raskin 95). These ideas resurfaced years later, appearing in early drafts of *Howl* which contain the lines "moloch whose name is America / Moloch whose name is Russia" (Miles 64). While he had begun to make

notes regarding his views on society, he had not yet found a space to express his poetry without consequence.

In 1954 Ginsberg moved to San Francisco and found the atmosphere that would allow him to reveal his message. Kerouac once wrote that “San Francisco. . .always gives you the courage of your convictions,” and perhaps this was the quality that led the area to foster so much of the cultural revolution that this country would see throughout the following decades (Raskin 9). The city’s geographical distance from both Washington, D.C. and New York City provided a sense of freedom to those who lived there (Raskin 10). The powers of oppression flowing through American during that era did not have the strength in San Francisco that they did elsewhere in the country, making it the perfect place for the specific art that revolutionary minds had been warned against producing. Moving to what became a sort of safe haven allowed Ginsberg the freedom of expression needed to achieve the type of experiences he was seeking. Due to the atmosphere of the city, bohemians and subterranean cultures were drawn there, quickly making San Francisco a breeding ground for counter cultural movements and artists producing more modern and innovative works. By 1955 McCarthy’s censorship, as well as the liberal nature of the city, set the stage for intense social movements. In 1951 W.H. Auden, a poet who urged caution to “revolutionary artists,” insisted that before any new material could be written a “cultural revolution” would have to take place (Raskin 6). Auden, as well as many others, may have predicted the revolution that would be needed in order to overcome the institutionalized insistence upon social norms. With the tyrannical reign of McCarthy coming to an end with his censorship, the possibility for provoking the necessary revolution became available. This seems to be the point at which Ginsberg first began to truly express his thoughts concerning the social climate of that era. In 1955 he wrote some of the most explosive poetry of his

career, revealing his opinions regarding the state of US society and the citizen's abandonment of "the beauty of souls in America" (Ginsberg 152).

One of the most revealing poems Ginsberg wrote in 1955 was *Sunflower Sutra*. This poem includes intense imagery in what Raskin describes as "a pastoral poem for the industrial age that contrasts the world of men and machines with the world of nature" (Raskin 123). Throughout the poem Ginsberg reveals his thoughts and experiences during an afternoon spent with Kerouac. He portrays Kerouac and himself as thinking "the same thoughts / of the soul, bleak and blue and sad-eyed, sur- / rounded by the gnarled steel roots of trees of / machinery" (1.2.6-9). This depiction of despair continues as Ginsberg discusses the destruction of nature and the organic by man. He mentions oily water with no fish "just our- / selves rheumy-eyed and hungover like old bums / on the riverbank" (1.3.12-14). These descriptions reveal Ginsberg's opinions regarding what has happened to mankind. Industry and machines are portrayed as filthy, lifeless entities. The people in the poem, Ginsberg and Kerouac, are said to be leading sad, desolate lives; however, this poem reveals a message of hope. The sunflower is presented as a broken, dirty, forgotten element of beauty in a world preoccupied with industrialization. Its filth is described as "no man's grime but death and human / locomotives," and the organic beauty of the flower is contrasted with the "artificial worse than dirt—industrial— / modern" (1.11-12.40-46). To emphasize the link between humans and industry he personifies the machines, discussing the "skin of machinery, the guts and innards / of the weeping coughing car, the empty lonely / tincans with their rusty tongues alack" (1.13.51-53). Directly after these descriptions of tangled and lifeless roots of society, he goes on to mention the "perfect beauty of a sunflower! a perfect excellent / lovely sunflower existence!" (1.15.61-62). Revealing the "sweet natural" elements of the flower amongst the cursed grime of its environment stresses the

contrast he is highlighting. Directly addressing the flower Ginsberg then goes on, stating “Poor dead flower? when did you forget you were a / flower? when did you look at your skin and / decide you were an impotent dirty old loco- / tive? the ghost of a locomotive? the specter and / shade of a once powerful mad American loco- / tive? You were never no locomotive, Sunflower, you were a / sunflower!” (1.17-18.69-76). At this point it becomes obvious that Ginsberg is addressing his audience and posing a question regarding the state of their society. Americans had forgotten the beauty of individuality in favor of the conformity that had been woven throughout their lives. Whether it was to be accepted socially, to ensure safety, or to prevent accusations of communism, conformity had become an essential element of the American lifestyle. Ginsberg was now arguing that it was a detrimental practice to restrict the beauty of individuality, which he viewed as holy. Recognizing the individual consciously acting upon their own thoughts and emotions as the pinnacle of human experience, he promoted a life of awareness in favor of the propaganda promoted submission. Contrasting the concept of man in the poem with his audience, addressed as a battered sunflower, he identifies with the side of mankind oppressed by authority. Glorifying this element in individual Americans, he poses it against the constrictive values that society enforced at that time. Concluding his message of hope in one of the most powerful sections of the poem, he explains to his audience, “We’re not our skin of grime, we’re not our dread / bleak dusty imageless locomotive, we’re all / beautiful golden sunflowers inside, we’re bles- / sed...” (1.22.83-86). This relays to the audience that they are not the society that they live within and they do not represent the same lifeless, submission that society demands. Instead they are beautiful, blessed individuals with experiences and opinions particular to their lives. Revealing the power of expression, Ginsberg was able to show his audience the benefits of refusing to conform. His use of imagery made a statement against the industrialization of America and its citizens. In this subtle way

he was able to open lines of communication in an atmosphere where they had previously been stifled, proving to others that a counter cultural current did exist. Although it may have been an underground movement at the time, events in the near future would reveal its message to the world.

In the summer of 1955 Wally Hedrick approached Ginsberg asking him to organize a poetry reading in the Six Gallery. This run down, experimental art gallery on Fillmore Street in San Francisco could, in Hedrick's opinion, provide the perfect setting for the cultural breakthrough that was needed. Ginsberg, having recently moved to San Francisco, felt that he did not know enough local poets, or enough about the area's poetry to be in charge of carrying out the local tradition of a poetry reading. He declined Hedrick's proposition; however, the idea obviously prompted him to action. By August 1955 the first draft of *Howl* had been written and Ginsberg had decided to accept the responsibility of arranging the Six Gallery reading, intending to unveil his new poem there. Perhaps Ginsberg realized that this was his opportunity to take action as what Foucault would describe as a specific intellectual. In wishing to change the violently oppressive culture that was prominent he may have seen this as his chance to provide others with the tools to accomplish this change. The event would take place on the evening of October 7, at 8 pm. Ginsberg advertised "6 poets at 6 Gallery" with posters and postcards promising, "...a remarkable collection of angels on one stage reading their poetry" and no charge for admission other than the collection that would be taken up for wine (Miles 165). It is clear from this manner of promotion that the poets' intended audience would be a younger, counter cultural, most likely lower class group. By targeting a specific audience who sympathized with his cause Ginsberg was able to arouse political feelings and motivate action. As the Gallery opened the night of the reading the crowd got drunk off jugs of red wine being passed around and acted unruly.

Kerouac, among others, could be heard yelling remarks and cheering from the back of the gallery. This fun, amateurish behavior, much different from that deemed acceptable by the educational films mentioned previously, helped to set the mood exactly as Ginsberg and Kerouac had hoped it would.

Just after 11 pm that night it was Ginsberg's turn to read, presenting his new poem with its radical language and poetic methods to the awaiting crowd. As he revealed an early draft of Part I of *Howl* to the audience before him, he transformed everyone there that night. He had intended the reading to "defy the system of academic poetry, official reviews, New York publishing machinery, national sobriety and generally-accepted standards to good taste" (Raskin 13). Not only did the reading achieve these intentions, but by demonstrating the power of expression it stimulated radical art, poetry, literature, and other counter-cultural issues in an immense way. Cutting the tension and silence induced by government-inflicted suppression, terror, and persecution, the Six Gallery reading created a place for these people to speak. This provides a clear example of Foucault's ideas regarding power in action. His theory states that resistance to an oppressive power can help overcome those wielding the power, allowing others to gain space to speak. Through resistance a specific intellectual can provide the tools necessary for oppressed individuals, stripped of the ability to speak or be heard, to reassert their own power. By claiming a space to express their own experiences and opinions they can assert their power against oppressive authorities and create new knowledge. Turning their resistance into a creative power, the artists involved in this reading caused new knowledge to emerge into the discursive formation. The reading gave poets and artists the authority to voice their opinions and provided them with a nonviolent outlet to speak against the culture in which they were drowning and the violence it was committing against them. Due to Foucault's assertion that individuals

both undergo and exercise power at all times, this demonstrates the process in which oppressive forces pushed citizens to assert their own power in a surge of delinquency. Foucault describes this resistance toward oppressive power as a discharge of inventive, productive energy. It seems clear that this reading fits that description perfectly. As Raskin points out, “the Six Gallery reading helped to create the condition for both the San Francisco protests against the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1960 and the Free Speech Movement at Berkeley in 1964,” due to the fact that it provided proof that the First Amendment hadn’t been destroyed by the horrors of McCarthyism (Raskin 7). Proving that the power of speaking was effective in unifying to change one’s conditions, this reading set the stage for future counter cultures to speak out. Writing about the event two years later, Ginsberg noted that the poets involved “were left with the realization that they were fated to make a permanent change in the literary firmament of the States” (Miles 165). Through this use of literature and the spoken word, the resistance shared by counter cultures during that time was organized and solidified, strategically creating a place for their knowledge to exist and expand within the discursive formation. Through speaking aloud and voicing the very questions, concerns, and emotions that the educational films designated as inappropriate, the artists involved demonstrated the value of expression.

While the version of *Howl* read at the Six Gallery was very different from the version that would eventually be published, the points being made still came across quite clearly. One member of the audience, Michael McClure, later wrote that, “Ginsberg read on to the end of the poem, which left us standing in wonder, or cheering and wondering, but knowing at the deepest level that a barrier had been broken, that a human voice and body had been hurled against the harsh wall of America” (“Allen Ginsberg”). It is clear that this poem was an upwelling of energy in response to the

oppressive powers that Ginsberg and his audience were struggling against. The misconception regarding that energy, however, was that *Howl* was a “negative howl of protest.” Arguing against that conception of his work, Ginsberg always maintained that *Howl* was “an act of sympathy, not rejection” where he was “leaping *out* of a preconceived notion of social ‘values.’” He explained that the poem exposed his “true feelings of sympathy and identification with the rejected, mystical, individual even ‘mad’”(Ginsberg 152).

When discussing Part I of his poem he stated, “I have taken a leap of detachment from the Artificial preoccupations and preconceptions of what is acceptable and normal and given my yea to the specific type of madness listed in the Who section” (Ginsberg 152). In this portion of the piece Ginsberg uses language and imagery to shatter any concept of absolute reality. Through this method he was able to reject the idea of absolute Truth which was a fundamental part of social values in America. In the first line he begins, “I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by / madness” (1.1.1). Then portraying them as “angelheaded” he goes on to reveal their poverty, tatters, and hollow-eyes (Ginsberg 9). He continues describing them stating,

who loned it through the streets of Idaho seeking visionary
 Indian angels who were visionary Indian angels,

 who thought they were only mad when Baltimore gleamed
 in supernatural ecstasy,

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

 who lounged hungry and lonesome through Houston
 seeking jazz or sex or soup, and followed the brilliant

Spaniard to converse about America and Eternity, a
hopeless task, and so took ship to Africa (1.25-28.78-90).

By portraying the “who” of Part I in this way, Ginsberg included an immediate shock concerning the perception of Truth and social value. Within the first lines of the poem readers are already confronted with a concept that would have previously been unfathomable. Characters described as “angelheaded” and portrayed as sacred are the very same as those looking for a fix and participating in unlawful acts. Whereas only those conforming to the accepted standards of society had been considered sacred and holy prior to this poem, Ginsberg had now revealed the intrinsic spiritual value in every individual. From the very beginning he links the counter culture that he describes with drugs, sex, and insanity. He repeatedly refers to illicit sexual acts, whether heterosexual or homosexual, making this one of the defining aspects of the “who” involved. It is clear that the emphasis placed upon these categories directly reflects how much American society suppressed each one. Ginsberg described *Howl* as “the first discovery as far as *communication* of feeling and truth” that he had made at that point in time (Ginsberg 152). In his attempt to express “the beauty of souls in America” he refused to hide the reality that society was afraid of (Ginsberg 152). Real Americans enjoyed recreational drug use and illicit sexual activities, and that did not mean that they were insane. The main goal of *Howl* seems to be to identify with those considered mad and provoke mercy within the audience for themselves and for others. In a society where citizens had been conditioned to stifle any individual thoughts and reject any deviation from the norms, mercy seemed to be a lost attribute. From broad concepts to specific events, a range of situations are portrayed throughout Part I as Ginsberg attempts to identify with his audience and achieve a Burkean transformation regarding their perspectives and realities. Kenneth Burke explains that through identification one can help others to

understand what they have in common, and therefore provoke understanding and a transformation of their opinions. Showing his audience that a group sharing their ideas existed and pointing out how they differed from and were persecuted by the status quo, Ginsberg was able to transform their submission, solidifying engagement against oppressive authorities restricting counter cultures and individualism. Repetition of the word “who” paired with events that directly contradicted the accepted norms allowed identification with a specific, open-minded group to be achieved. Through mentioning deviant sexual behavior and using obscene language unheard of at that time, the statement made in *Howl* carried the ability to shock, awe, and inspire an audience to action.

Mary Bucholtz, after studying youth in California in 2006, stated, profane language can be used “to construct subcultural participation” (Bucholtz 12). It seems clear that this ability appealed to Ginsberg. In a study regarding the use of taboo words and subjects, Timothy Jay asserts that “the primary use of swearing is for emotional connotation” achieving a particularly positive outcome when “a speaker replaces physical violence with speech or feels a sense of relief or catharsis” (Jay 155). Jay and another scholar, Janschewitz, state that the “use of and reaction to swear words tell us who we are and where we fit in a culture; in short, our identities are marked by our use of swear words” (Janschewitz 275). From this research related to the use of obscenity, it is clear how this rhetorical tactic would have allowed Ginsberg to identify with his audience and demonstrate the power of free expression without oppressive restrictions, and without the violence that would have been the preferred path of NSC 68. Janschewitz explains the arousal caused by taboo or profane words is much higher than accepted vocabulary, stating these “words yielded differences in patterns of neural activity associated with the initial word processing” (Janschewitz 1065). It is clear that

this difference in neural activity and the process of excitement regarding these words added power to the message Ginsberg was expressing. While this power was met with wild enthusiasm from those identifying with the ideas, it also came up against fierce opposition. During some of the first readings of *Howl* he was asked to tame his language. At the San Francisco Poetry Center he edited the most famous line of the poem, instead exclaiming, “who let themselves be censored in the censored” (Raskin 172). The shock and censorship regarding this rhetorical method only added to the power surrounding its message. In a text celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of *Howl* and its impact on America, Jason Shinder commented that “the poem demonstrated (in a seismic way) that literary and social change could emanate from the shared spirit of a highly charged language” (Shinder xxv). This reaction to the work clearly conveys the success of Ginsberg’s rhetoric and the literary accomplishments available through “the language of drug addicts, homosexuals, and sexual outlaws” never before seen in America poetry (Raskin 145).

The second portion of *Howl* presented its audience with a scathing social commentary as the opening line asks, “What sphinx of cement and aluminum bashed open / their skulls and ate up their brains and imagi- / nation?” (2.1.1-3). Moloch is repeatedly posited as the horrific entity American society has become. The reference to Moloch was taken from the name of the Canaanite fire god worshipped by the sacrifice of children, providing the audience with a mythological, yet identifiable scapegoat for the criticism of social flaws. Placing the blame safely upon an illusion Ginsberg was free to attack America’s social downfalls. Considered in the context of the educational films addressed above, it is interesting that he chose to use a mythological concept related to the death of children. Given Ginsberg’s opinions about society depriving children of their innocence, this is a particularly weighty criticism. In his own explanation Ginsberg

reveals that “Moloch is the vision of the mechanical feelingless inhuman world we live in and accept” believing that the key line of the poem was “Moloch whom I abandon” (Ginsberg 152). Portraying “children screaming,” “boys sobbing in armies,” and “old men weeping,” Ginsberg evokes emotion related to a spectrum of age groups, provoking the realization that the entire culture had been affected (2.2.5-7). Providing the audience with specific images to connect to the ideas he was depicting, he targeted their passions and added immense depth to his point. He then went on, describing Moloch “whose mind is pure machinery,” “whose blood is running money,” and “whose fingers are ten armies” (2.5.16-18). All of these descriptions point to the institutions that were shown to be destructive throughout Part I, such as capitalism, militarism, nationalism, and industrialism, portraying them through particularly menacing imagery. Writing “Moloch who entered my soul early,” “Moloch who frightened me out of my natural ecstasy!” the audience is given a glimpse of how this fearful lifestyle affected Ginsberg and a generation sharing the same experience (2.9.35-36). Throughout Part II the presentation of a scapegoat upon whom the audience can lay blame is continued. It provides the audience with an identifiable entity to blame, as well as adding an element of mythification to the text. Toward the end of Part II Ginsberg notes, “They broke their backs lifting Moloch to Heaven!” (2.11.43). This seems to convey the idea that while all of these institutions had been praised as something to better the country, in their path to success they suffocated the individuality of the culture.

Part III of *Howl* revolves around a central theme of unity. Repetition of the phrase “I’m with you in Rockland” portrays a message of solidarity through the social construct of “madness” (3.1.1-66). After defining the problems throughout Part I and offering Moloch as an identifiable outlet in Part II, Part III serves as his assertion that unity and action are the keys to surviving the social atmosphere that individuality was

drowning in. In doing this Ginsberg fulfills Darsey's concept of a prophet. After identifying the problematic aspects of the lives that Americans are living, he shows them the path to redemption. Offering the tools of unity and actions, he gave his audience tools they would need to achieve salvation.

It is important to note that by the end of Part III Ginsberg writes, "I'm with you in Rockland / where we hug and kiss the United States under / our bedsheets the United States that coughs all / night and won't let us sleep" (3.17.50-53). This displays affection for the country that he has been so frustrated with, allowing the audience to understand that while he is disturbed by the established conventions deemed appropriate, he does love the country. It also alludes to the rejection of natural ecstasy projected by American society as it specifies kissing the US under the bedsheets. In the very next line a glimpse of the changes that Ginsberg has been hoping for is given. The poem states, "I'm with you in Rockland / where we wake up electrified out of the coma" (3.18.54-55). This could be a reference to a nation opening its eyes to "Truth" as Ginsberg understood it, as well as waking from the nightmare that the nation's atmosphere had inflicted. By concluding the section in this way, it becomes clear that Ginsberg intended to motivate his audience to make changes in America.

The next section entitled *Footnote to Howl*, is significantly shorter than the other sections and seems to clearly serve one purpose. Describing a multitude of things including angels and bums as "holy," he repeats the word continuously. The section ends stating, "Holy the supernatural extra brilliant intelligent / kindness of the soul" (4.15.40-41). This may have been one portion of the poem intended to invoke "an act of self-realization, self acceptance and the consequent...ability to see and love others in themselves as angels without stupid mental self deceiving moral categories selecting *who* it is safe to sympathize with and who is not safe" (Ginsberg 152). Ginsberg wanted

people to stop focusing on abstract categories of right and wrong as defined by “society” and instead realize love, sympathy, and mercy for their fellow men. Frustrated with a lack of attention to the beauty of the human soul, he combated the social values that perpetuated that perspective through his poetry. In regard to publishing *Howl* Ginsberg later commented, “I was curious to leave behind after my generation an emotional time bomb that would continue exploding in U.S. consciousness in case our military-industrial complex solidified into a repressive police bureaucracy” (Miles xii). His success is more than obvious as writers and artists fifty years later continue to comment on the power of the piece, describing it as “an opening shot in a culture war” (Shinder 9).

In January of the following year, 1956, Ginsberg wrote another poem entitled *America*. This poem revealed momentum that had been gained from the success *Howl* achieved and offered a much more direct criticism of America. Within the lines of this poem the absolute reality projected by the media at that time is contrasted with the messy reality of life. Throughout the first portion of the poem America is addressed and questioned about much of the oppression present. As *America* opens Ginsberg states, “Go fuck yourself with your atom bomb” (1.1.6). Again relying on the power afforded by the use of profanity, this line reveals an intense message regarding America’s use of apocalyptic weapons. Soon after he tells America, “Your machinery is too much for me. / You made me want to be a saint” (1.1.20-21). Darsey quotes poet Robert Penn Warren in *A Place to Come To*, as saying, “In my powerlessness, it seemed that I was becoming identified with the very powers that had drained me of power. I knew, in other words, what hero, saint, Marxist, criminal, artist, and madman must know: identity with fate” (Darsey 15). In that context it seems Ginsberg may be referring to the machinery and therefore the conformity that suppressed him during his life, stating that it led him to his fate. The persecution inflicted upon him by America drove him to speak out, showing

others an alternative path to redemption. Going on he later states, "America stop pushing I know what I'm doing" (1.1.29). This seems to reveal the oppression and bullying of citizens that was being caused by the norms sanctioned as socially appropriate. Shortly after this line Ginsberg breaks into a section expressed in stream-of-consciousness. In this portion he reveals facts about himself that cause him to be persecuted. He states, "America I used to be a communist when I was a kid / I'm not sorry" and goes on to describe socially unacceptable experiences involving drugs and sexual acts (1.1.34-35). This rant ends with a phrase that hints at but doesn't reveal atrocities America has committed, stating, "America I still haven't told you what you did to Uncle / Max after he came over from Russia" (1.1.45-46). The poem then launches into an attack on the media and its part in the oppression of the American public. He poses a question, asking "Are you going to let your emotional life be run by / Time Magazine? I'm obsessed by Time Magazine" (1.2.48-49). Mentioning businessmen and movie producers, he also lays blame on corporations for producing the propaganda that promoted conformity among Americans. Throughout the poem links are made to the bomb, machinery, media, religion, patriotism, and especially society. These all convey the intense feelings that Ginsberg had regarding these institutions and their effect on American citizens. He then returns to the idea of a poem that compares both Russia and America. In the end of the poem Ginsberg's use of language to convey an idea of consciousness works in a very powerful way. As he begins to discuss Russia, his grammar begins to deteriorate. The first appearance of this technique is seen in a line stating, "America it's them bad Russians" (1.3.96). As the poem proceeds to use this method, it portrays Russia as a horrific entity wanting to eat Americans alive and eventually refers to it as "The Russia," solidifying an impression of this country as an evil enemy (1.3.99). A shift then takes place where the atrocities being committed are applicable to America as well, revealing the reality of Russia simply being another

country rather than a flesh eating nightmare. The following portion of the poem seems to end on a note of concern, relaying the seriousness of the matter at hand and provoking action through that message. Ginsberg closes by stating, "America this is quite serious. / America this is the impression I get from looking in / the television set. / America is this correct?" (1.3.110-111). This is a call of attention towards the importance of this issue and the propaganda surrounding it. He then goes on to state, "I'd better get right down to the job. / It's true I don't want to join the Army or turn lathes / in precision parts factories, I'm nearsighted and / psychopathic anyway. / America I'm putting my queer shoulder to the wheel" (1.3.113-117). In this final statement he seems to be admitting that he is expressing his overall point, getting "right down to the job." He doesn't want to participate in the institutionalized monotony of what American society has become. After all, didn't American society tell him he wasn't cut out for those jobs? And since he's not, he's now deciding to put his queer shoulder to the wheel towards a job he is qualified for; provoking a revolutionary change regarding the oppressive nature of American society.

Throughout these poems Ginsberg was able to demonstrate through imagery, descriptions, and real experiences that the concept of absolute reality was not possible in a real life scenario. In the chaos that the world presented every experience and individual was what should be valued. Trying to funnel everything into abstract categories designated as right and wrong, good and evil, enemy or friend, was not only a hopeless task but a detrimental one as well. Through this course of action individuality had been stifled in America and the expression of art, thought, and knowledge had suffered. Ginsberg's words and actions during this period of time demonstrated to his audience that there was a way to live an alternative lifestyle and reject the conformity imposed upon their reality. Through the language he projected Ginsberg was able to

display the range of possibilities available to a conscious mind and help his audience to find their individual paths.

CHAPTER 4: MARIO SAVIO

Throughout the following years various counter cultural movements would strive to change the status quo of American society. Due in large part to the Beats and the Six Gallery Reading, groups who may have been pressured into silence by a conformist environment found a space where they could voice their opinions and experiences. NSC 68 issued a direct request for propaganda promoting unquestioning citizens. The educational films developed in response to this promoted behavior among the public that prevented them from expressing their opinions. Countering this manipulation, radical figures in this country's history spoke out, creating literature to rival the "reality" portrayed in these films. This avenue of expression led to countless acts of rebellion against the authoritative forces dominating social actions at that point in time. The events that took place during the Free Speech Movement in Berkeley, CA have been directly connected to Ginsberg's actions by various scholars, including Jonah Raskin, author of *American Scream*, and David Steigerwald, author of *The Sixties & The End of Modern America*. The conditions Ginsberg, and other radical figures, created by demonstrating the power of free and unrestricted speech allowed future counter cultural movements to harness that momentum. They were able to perpetuate a dialectic adding their knowledge, experiences, and opinions into the discursive formation.

The fall of 1964 was a particularly volatile period on the campus of the University of California, Berkeley. The civil rights movement had been taking place as the percentage of Americans possessing televisions in their homes was rising considerably, and there was a new sense of political awareness, particularly among the children of depression-era, middle-class parents, that had not existed previously. The students at

Berkeley felt very strongly about the political atmosphere at the time, participating in rallies, fund-raising, and encouraging off-campus interaction with various movements, among other forms of advocacy. Due to the fact that the students attending Berkeley at this time would have been subjected to the educational films in question, it is easy to understand where this surge of political activism was stemming from. These were the children silenced by films demanding a socially imposed conformity. Unwilling to remain submissive any longer, they were now speaking out about the injustices committed all around them.

Still influenced by the remnants of fear remaining from the Cold-War-era's Red Scare, the university administrators sought to stifle the radical ideas presented by the students in order to avoid controversy with legislators who controlled the university's budget. The president of the University of California at that time, Clark Kerr, insisted on operating under what he termed "the implicit contract of 1935" (Cohen 75). This contract stated that in order to maintain autonomy from the legislature, the UC could not "allow its facilities to be used as a 'platform for propaganda'" (Cohen 75). Designed to keep the university out of political controversy, this policy banned any form of political advocacy on university property. The repression of free expression on campus was not acceptable to a student body so active in the current political movements. In order to continue their advocacy amidst the repression of the administration, the students used a twenty-six foot strip of brick sidewalk known as the Bancroft Strip to express their opinions without interference. Originally, the Bancroft Strip was believed to lie beyond university property making it the closest location where students were able to exercise their First Amendment rights. On this strip, different groups would set up card tables representing civil rights, antiwar, and partisan organizations. These groups distributed leaflets, promoted off-campus activities, and discussed different political opinions.

Radical, liberal, and conservative views were all voiced in this place, allowing students to learn about and participate in crucial movements taking place.

In mid-September of 1964, after realizing that the Bancroft Strip actually rested on campus property, the administration made attempts to close this area to student activists. This act proved how little the administration understood the student's political convictions. Several of the students had learned of the civil rights movement from activists on the Bancroft Strip and had recently returned from volunteering with the Freedom Summer Project. This was an endeavor that brought volunteers to Mississippi to organize voter registration and help black citizens achieve the power to be heard. Mario Savio was one student who had gone to help during this situation and witnessed extreme violence due to racial tension. Savio, as well as others, linked the ban on the Bancroft Strip directly with civil rights. Explaining his adamancy he stated, "The holy for me...was right actions performed with great power. In that sense, the Civil Rights Movement was Holy" (Cohen 77). Feeling that the injustices involved in this cause needed to be exposed in order to correct them, he expressed the sacred nature of this struggle and revealed a path to redemption. He saw this constriction of speech by authority as being directly linked to those stifling the voices and the votes of the African-American population in Mississippi. By repressing politics on campus, Savio felt that the university administration was committing the same moral crime as the racists in Mississippi. Due to the depth of his feelings regarding civil rights in America, Savio felt that this was an ethical dilemma and believed that, "it would be *shameful* not to stand up" (Cohen 75). From this statement it is easy to see why Savio submitted himself to martyrdom for the cause. He believed this struggle was "Holy" and therefore thought it could lead American's to salvation. Because of this Savio was willing to subject himself to the violence he would undoubtedly encounter. His willingness to suffer not only

displayed strong ethos to his audience, but also allowed them to understand that martyrdom was an effective method as they faced oppressive authorities. Savio portrayed the importance of placing the cause above one's self, demonstrating the power of a group of people willing to sacrifice themselves. Explaining where these deep convictions came from he stated, ". . .commitment to a free speech movement had never been an abstract or purely political matter for me" (Cohen 77). It is clear from the reaction of the student body that Savio was not alone. The administration had clearly misjudged the students' reaction to the restriction of speech. Regarding the situation Savio stated, "They didn't realize the emotional depth of commitment of the students to the civil rights movement" (Cohen 77). Nor did they expect that commitment to carry over into organized resistance toward the ban. By restricting speech on campus, the administration had effectively cut student support towards political movements, as well as arousing intense feelings regarding the constriction of speech. Treating the ban as another phase of the movement in the South, Savio sprang to action in order to overturn the ruling and secure the right to free speech on campus.

The political intensity on campus, paired with the radical student voices present, made this situation quickly escalate beyond anyone's expectations. Over the course of the month Mario Savio emerged among the student activists as a form of leader. He spoke of his "*own* experience of repeatedly interrupted speech," explaining that growing up with a stammer made him aware of the importance involved in speaking freely (Cohen 77). Savio's understanding of the issues at hand made him an ideal spokesperson for the movement. His passion regarding the students' causes, as well as his moral convictions, overshadowed the fact that he was a twenty-one year old undergraduate. He spoke with intense emotion and made valid arguments against the administration, developing a voice of authority within the situation. He explained how the

repression of free speech necessarily led to issues such as civil rights, stating that this information was “the kind of fact [that once] you inform people. . .they want to *do something* about it. . .if the thing you tell people about is *bad enough* then it. . .leads immediately to advocacy, organization, and action” (Cohen 78,79). This statement provides an early demonstration of Savio’s intention to incite not only action, but martyrdom. In the face of an intense struggle for free speech he conveyed the idea that words can provoke action. Understanding the consequence of the speech he was promoting, martyrdom was an obvious repercussion.

Volunteering to be a delegate in early negotiations, Savio attended a meeting with Katherine Towle, the dean of students, and applied the rhetorical teachings of Socrates. Insisting that Towle clarify her terms, he asked to know the basis for the Bancroft ban. Her reply that the strip was on campus property was immediately shot down by Mario, who explained that this was not a reason but a fact. He stated, “A reason is something which determines an ‘ought’ kind of situation, but a fact is just a fact” (Cohen 83). Towle’s failure to provide justification during the meeting further spurred the movement, and Savio’s rhetorical tactics proved his authority to his peers. This polite negotiation with the administration had allowed the activists to challenge the logic and justice of the university authority. Feeling that ground had been gained, the students requested a second meeting on September 21. The students were presented with a compromise extended by the administration. Offering to allow tables to remain on the strip in order to distribute “informative” literature, the ban on politically advocative material remained in place (Cohen 84). To organizations existing entirely to advocate social action and political change, this was unacceptable. In reaction, a group of about a hundred students held an all night vigil outside the administrative building. Savio’s

participation in this vigil, as well as the free speech rally that took place a week later, signified his emergence as a leader and powerful orator in the free speech movement.

During the unauthorized rally one week later, Savio argued against Clark Kerr, as well as his educational beliefs and practices. Both students and administration were taken aback by the power of Savio's words. Even Berkeley dean of men, Arleigh Williams, would later note that Savio displayed boldness, justifying his actions with the "principle of double effect," explaining, ". . .that when one is seeking an end which is morally sound (quite apart from its legality or illegality), the selection of the means employed must be governed by the judgment that the probable good effects outweigh the potential bad effects" (Cohen 85). The dean's comments regarding Savio's actions give the impression that, even from a biased standpoint, his argumentative techniques were solid. Savio spoke against Kerr, stating that "he had no understanding of the need for student political activity" (Cohen 84). These students had been suppressed their entire lives and were now dealing with a surge of political opinions they wished to share. While the full text of the speeches from that event did not survive, Savio's actions during the rally still provide an interesting rhetorical occurrence. In considering Savio's radical nature and belief in civil-disobedience, it is important that the rally took place without the approval of the administration. Savio was not said to have promoted any unlawful actions, speaking mainly on the importance of the civil rights movement and the student involvement concerning current issues. While his speech itself was not controversial, his actions embodied an unauthorized and unlawful deed. Perhaps this display of the harmless and effective nature of a disobedient act desensitized his audience to the cultural conditioning to obey they had been subjected to. Savio would later comment on civil disobedience, stating, "You can't disobey the rules every time you disapprove. However, when you're considering something that constitutes an extreme abridgement

of your rights, conscience is the court of last resort” (Fincher). This provided a justification for the actions of the movement, revealing them to be so morally right that they were above the law. Savio’s act provided a demonstration regarding the illogical foundation of some laws, as well as what can be achieved by breaking them for reasons that are morally sound. This demonstrated the productive power of resistance, giving his audience the device they would eventually use to make their statements heard.

The tension surrounding the Bancroft situation continued to build, finally inciting a confrontation with the administration. On September 30, Savio’s roommate, Brian Turner, was staffing a political table on the strip in direct violation of the ban when he was approached by administration. This situation resulted in five students being cited on the strip, and three others, including Savio, being suspended. In response over three hundred students marched on Sproul Hall for an all night sit in. Savio reported, “We all marched into Sproul Hall and there we were. . .just a glob of people. . .And so I just started talking for all these people. . .There was no formal legitimacy for my talking. . .but it was and continued to be clear that a lot of people were feeling what at the same time I was expressing and it was a very useful thing” (Cohen 88). Savio made various statements that evening, beginning by arguing that by restricting advocacy of various ideas, the administration had stripped the students of some of their most important rights.

He then turned the argument against Kerr and the idea of a “knowledge factory” described within his book, *The Uses of the University*. Kerr had reportedly intended for his ideas to promote a university operating as a functional part of society; however, his method of achieving this described the treatment of students as a simple product, no different than subhuman machine parts. Within the text Kerr writes, “The production, distribution, and consumption of ‘knowledge’ in all its forms is said to account for 29

percent of gross national product...What the railroads did for the second half of the last century and the automobile for the first half of this century may be done for the second half of this century by the knowledge industry: that is to serve as the focal point for national growth” (Kerr 66). It is interesting to note that Kerr fails to refer to the “knowledge” he is discussing as the students who hold that knowledge and, therefore, the people who make up his product. Instead he goes on making comparisons between this product and the machinery of railroads and automobiles. The products were the students of Berkeley, educated by impersonal films telling them to fit in like parts of a machine in order to become popular. For this reason his idea was met with intense opposition. Presenting this concept as dehumanizing, among other things, Savio linked Kerr’s publication to the problem at hand.

Stating that Kerr’s idea of operating a university as a factory created products that were dependent upon society as opposed to living freely, Savio showed that the restriction of free speech was necessary in order for Kerr to achieve his vision of what a university should be. Kerr’s concept of a university functioning to produce products for an industrial nation may have fit comfortably within the ideal situation of officials who drafted *NSC68*, but it clashed dramatically with the educational process desired by Berkeley’s students. Savio “charged that Kerr’s factory was infantilizing, dehumanizing, and narrowly vocational; it aimed to convert students into cogs in the corporate machine, stifled individuality and freedom” (Cohen 89). To a group of students who had grown up immersed in repression, being told to act like machine parts to fit into their social surroundings, this was an unacceptable method of education. By discussing the connection between Kerr’s ideas and student “cogs” with his audience, Savio was able to display Kerr’s distance from the identification within the movement. While Savio and his audience agreed on the necessity of free speech in an educational atmosphere, they

now saw that Kerr did not. He instead believed in a method of education that resembled a factory in which, as Savio put it, you could not be “expressive of your individuality” (Cohen 90). He told the crowd that “Just like any factory”...the products go in,

. . . on one side as kind of rough-cut adolescents, and they come out the other side pretty smooth. When they enter the University they're dependent upon their parents...Now, they're depended upon the University. They're product. And they're prepared to leave the University, to go out and become members of other organizations—various businesses usually...which they are then dependent on in the same way. And never, at any point, is provision made for their taking their places as free men! (Cohen 89, 90).

Speaking against this “knowledge factory,” Savio pointed out that just like any machine this factory consisted of parts that could go out of commission. Referring to the students as what had gone out of commission in order to disrupt the factory, he directly connected Kerr's ideal university and his reasoning for enforcing a restriction upon free speech. By making this truth visible to his audience and connecting the personal and political, he invoked extreme unity and emotion within the crowd. Also, by extending Kerr's metaphor of a university factory, Savio was able to portray the university administration as subhuman. This was an extremely effective tactic in creating more distance between the solidarity of the movement and the machine-driven administration, out to strip students of their rights. Ginsberg had already expressed the distance between lifeless machinery and the sacredness of the organic throughout his poetry. This is one of the first occurrences of Savio twisting the image of authorities in question in the same way. The machinery being promoted by government and university officials was directly linked

here to production and the industrialization of the country. Showing that the concept being promoted was creating a society which placed no value upon the individual, Savio helped his audience to fully understand the implications involved.

With Kerr now clearly depicted as the Other, the struggle gained momentum. Savio was using rhetoric that was directly related to the zeitgeist of the moment. He spoke of the university's role in controversial projects, claiming that the posed neutrality of the University was "a lot of hogwash!" (Cohen 92). He stated, "It's...the most unpolitically neutral organization that I've had personal contact with," and going on to give a concrete explanation for this lack of neutrality, he condemned Berkeley's work in "building newer and better atom bombs" (Cohen 92). Using this as proof that the campus was anything but politically neutral, he showed the lack of logic within the administration's decision, as well as setting them apart from the moral integrity of the movement. Depicting the ban as void of logos, those within the movement gained further assurance that their path was truly right. Due to this method, his audience saw this struggle as directly affecting the current situation in the country, which they had been fighting to overcome. Students were now prepared with the knowledge Savio had provided, and were ready to fight for their rights.

The administration met to discuss its strategy, agreeing that disciplinary actions only stirred more controversy. They decided upon legal action, dealing with the students by picking off "one at a time," and a consensus was reached to "avoid police action—except non-students" at that time (Cohen 98). This demonstrated that the unity Savio had evoked amongst the activists had been greatly underestimated by university administrators. On October 1 the controversy on Berkeley's campus reached a climactic point, displaying the most militant confrontation yet. A former graduate student who had dropped out to lead Campus CORE, Jack Weinberg, was approached while staffing a

CORE table. While the administration saw this man as an outsider due to the fact that he was not a student, they had not factored his activism and presence in the movement into the equation. Weinberg refused to identify himself and, practicing the methods he had learned throughout working in the civil rights movement, went completely limp when threatened with arrest. In an extremely dramatic scene he was dragged to the police car which had been pulled into the center of Sproul Plaza. As Savio later recalled, the presence of the police car demonstrated “a fairly major level of stupidity” on the part of the administration (Cohen 98). Pulling it into Sproul Plaza around noon, this would have been the most crowded spot on campus during the busiest time of day. The plaza was filled with students witnessing Weinberg’s arrest when someone in the crowd shouted, “SIT DOWN!” The activists immediately responded, surrounding the car. This provides a clear example of Savio’s lessons regarding civil disobedience in action.

Understanding that their cause was more “right” than what was deemed appropriate and legal in that situation, they challenged the authorities attempting to suppress them. The movement had been looking for a direct confrontation to bridge the gap between the protest and the mass of students. This provided a demonstration of one of the dominant members of the group subjecting himself to persecution, and even martyrdom, for the betterment of the movement. Seeing how much of an impact this scene presented, Savio sprang to action. Making his way to the car, Savio sat on the hood, removed his shoes, stood, and moved to the roof of the car. He then began speaking, disabling the power of the police car he referred to as “the symbol of the other side,” which unified activists had paralyzed (Cohen 99). He would later recall that although his action that day felt “a little bit questionable, a little bit risky. . .it. . .had a kind of poetic rightness to it” (Cohen 99). Explaining, “Sometimes you’re just. . .gripped by the moment and you have a feel for what’s poetically right,” Savio imparts the idea that the message he was promoting was more important than the risk he was taking. In making this statement he

demonstrates that he fulfills Darsey's idea of a prophet, facing martyrdom for a cause he deems worthy. In revealing the importance of free speech he reveals a path to salvation. Attempting to illuminate the injustices prevalent in American society, Savio obviously wishes to shed light on an alternate path to redemption for citizens both blinded and silenced by oppression.

Savio's actions as he topped the police car, incited 32 hours of continuous speaking from various activists. While he may have prompted the situation, it is important to note that he was not in charge. He would later state, "Who was running the police car [blockade]? Nobody was running it. It was running itself" (Cohen 101). The activists were joining together in order to overcome the university's repression and take a stand for the importance of justice over order. Like Ginsberg's use of poetry served as a means for liberation, Savio's actions embodied Foucault's description of a specific intellectual. He identified with an audience that shared his political views and, therefore, provided tools to create change without molding his audience's opinions. His actions, arguments, and speeches proved to the crowd that their unified voice could be heard. He had created a place for them to speak and given them the authority to do so despite the repression of the administration. At the demonstration on October 1, Savio beautifully combined the scene and agency, speaking to an emotional crowd from atop a symbol of their oppression. His decision to use the car as a podium made a serious impression on everyone involved. In doing this he was able to considerably deepen the impact of the statement being made, which he expected at that point to reach a nationwide, if not global audience. Regarding the situation he stated, "I had a clear sense that this little place had become...one of the central places on the planet" and he, as well as many others, understood that they were making global history (Cohen 101). The broadening of his audience was crucial to his purpose of recruiting followers and

ending the restriction of free speech by raising awareness regarding the unjust policies of the university. In reaching more people he saw that he could be more successful in overcoming the oppressive forces, and through his new, larger audience, his message could include much more than the university.

While Savio's actions embodied a very important statement, his words also deepened the impact. The logic that Savio expressed in response to the administration's statements was what kept their belief in the movement so strong. Even Savio's philosophy professor, John Searle, described Savio as "an intellectual who mastered ideas from diverse disciplines and brought his learning to bear on Berkeley's political crisis" (Cohen 104). His rebuttals continuously spurred on the enthusiasm of his peers, despite the efforts of the administration. The vehemence he embodied evoked a surge of excitement from his audience. Jack Weinberg recalls that by the second day "loud speakers had been set up in the Plaza, and anybody...could sign up on a list and...had three minutes to say anything...Hour after hour people...who had never spoken before were orating and...inspiring each other" (Cohen 103). Having given the crowd the tools of oration, solidarity, and the knowledge that they could be heard and make a difference, Savio showed his peers how to achieve the change that they desired. Attracting outside support through connections to the civil rights movement, Savio was able to accomplish pragmatic cooperation among those who shared his opinions.

An agreement would eventually be reached that night; however the agreement, known as the Pact of October 2, never appealed to Savio. He agreed to the pact only after the original wording had been changed. He felt that the stipulation which stated, "The student demonstrators promise to abide by legal processes in their protest of University regulations," was far too binding (Freeman 167). Only after it had been changed to say, "The student demonstrators shall desist from all forms of illegal protest

against University regulations,” would he sign (Freeman 167). In explaining his adamancy regarding this change, he stated that the term “desist” was singular and therefore interpreted to mean that the students must end the current blockade, but did not ensure they would not engage in future protests. This altered the original stipulation, which promised to follow legal processes indefinitely. It seems important, when looking at Savio as a specific intellectual, to note his democratic nature in regard to the pact. While he disagreed with this compromise from the very beginning, he still spoke to the crowd supporting the will of the majority. Due to the authority that he had developed throughout the course of the movement, he knew that it was necessary for him to present the crowd with the pact. Using his authority as a moral radical, he was able to convey the details of the negotiation to the crowd without sending a message of defeat. Calling the crowd’s attention directly to the changing of phrase, Savio made sure that the activists would understand the pact as he wanted them to, not as the administration had intended it. This was a very strategic maneuver regarding how the different realities of the pact were expressed. While the wording used meant to the administration that they had succeeded in ending the protests, those within the movement understood the very same words in an extremely different way. By emphasizing the meaning that was beneficial to their cause, Savio was able to choose the particular meaning of the pact that he wanted to live on through the actions of the activists. Using this method, Savio was able to achieve the reality he wanted despite a negotiation that he disagreed with. Understanding the importance of unity within the movement, he agreed to sign the pact in what may have been an act of solidarity. The act of signing the pact demonstrated the unity present within the movement, as opposed to the division of the administration. In a revealing act of rebellion, Chancellor Strong refused to sign the pact, portraying a picture of an administration in discord. This display left the activists appearing to be a stronger group, further supporting their cause.

After this encounter the activists made drastic organizational changes, naming themselves the Free Speech Movement (FSM) and designating an Executive and a Steering Committee. Participating in what Robert Cohen refers to as, “hyperdemocracy as only the young could practice it” the FSM Committees would stay up for hours, days, or as long as it took to reach consensus on an issue (Cohen 128). Savio believed strongly in this policy, stating, “The people must participate in making the decisions that affect their lives” (Cohen 124). The next event after the signing of the Pact occurred three days later on October 5. Savio discussed the fact that he had trouble receiving permission to speak that day and thanked the faculty who had helped him to finally obtain permission. He then very calmly depicted his account of the process leading to the negotiation of the Pact. The neutral language he used that day informed his audience without manipulating their opinions regarding the situation. During his last speech atop the police car, Savio shared his feelings about their next move stating, “I really feel we should wait on any kind of provocative action and. . .negotiate completely in good faith” (Cohen 137). The passive nature of his statement would be a fleeting element during the radical action of the weeks to come. The media’s portrayal of the movement as having communist ties, a valid source of frustration for those involved, was refuted by Savio directly. Understanding that the source of these accusations was the very same source of the oppression that had restricted free speech, Savio orated to the crowd discrediting the criticism they had received. He stated, “Thirty years ago, just about, in that period of time, there were...a lot of people trying to effect progressive change in the social and economic structure of the country...at that time...a great bogey man was raised...We are now involved in another great movement...for political and social liberality and fairness...and again this same phantom is being raised” (Cohen 138,139). This connection to the Red Scare, provided by the media, had an extreme impact upon the audience, raised in the oppressive environment that it fostered. It is

clear that this, paired with an inability to reach a resolution frustrated Savio, as well as other activists, to the point of radical action. Perhaps in acting as the specific intellectual, radical action was the method Savio found to be most effective. This would explain the change that took place in both Savio's message and tone from the October 5 rally to the December 2 demonstration.

An example of the rising frustration that Savio was experiencing can be perceived from the speech he gave at the next organized rally on October 16, warning the students against complacency. Relaying the constitutional convictions of their cause Savio explained, "We have bent lovingly over the baby being born...And by our courage...by dignity in the face of unprovoked violence, by the...principle[d protests] of the students on this campus...we've shown ourselves guilty of one thing—of passionately entering into a conspiracy to uphold the first and fourteenth amendments" (Cohen 144). Afterwards, on November 9, frustrated with the lack of progress being made, the FSM began to defy the administration by reinstating the presence of political tables and activists on the strip. University officials cited over seventy-five students during the incident. The conflict was intensified the following day as the presence of teaching assistants staffing the political tables left the administration puzzled as to how to respond. They abandoned issuing citations, demonstrating a lack of consistency that Savio viewed as a vindication of the FSM's struggle. In response, an announcement was made by the FSM on November 16 stating that the political tables would be set up on Sproul all week. In response Kerr issued a statement regarding the university's "great patience with temporary violations of public conflict," and warning that, "this patience is not infinite" (Cohen 164). This led the FSM to focus on the organization of a demonstration that would take place November 20, at a Board of Regents meeting.

In a very respectful attempt by the FSM to participate in the university's methods they planned to attend the meeting. The activists arrived wearing coats and ties and publicized that there would be no rule breaking involved. They were completely ignored by the university's board members, despite the fact that Joan Baez participated in the event and a group of over four thousand activists came out. Leaving those involved in the movement feeling extreme despair, this led to the upwelling of anger and resistance that was to come. At a rally on December 1, Savio made a plea to his audience. He explained his position of desperation in clear terms, stating "I am not naïve enough to believe the university will admit they're wrong" (Cohen 176). Feeling that the administration would reject the demands they were making, he saw a mass demonstration of unified resistance as the only path to success. He then told the crowd, "If you don't respond we're dead" (Cohen 176). This statement conveyed the importance of participation in regard to the survival of the movement. Through these words, Savio related his knowledge that at this point in the process inaction meant defeat. During the same rally he effectively applied the imagery that he would use in his speech the following day, stating, "The factory does unjust things and we'll have to cause the wheels to grind to a halt...If we don't get our constitutional rights we won't let this machine operate" (Cohen 176). This imagery allowed Savio to depict the university as being impersonal, dehumanizing, and unjust. Appealing to the pathos of the audience, as well as reminding them of the moral rightness of their cause, this statement was his call to action. Having provided the movement with every necessary tool for success, they would have to practice the civil disobedience he had nurtured, as a unified front.

The following day, a leaflet was distributed by the FSM calling the activists to action. It announced that a rally would be held that day, on December 2, and advertised

the participation of Joan Baez. The leaflet also explicitly mentioned the intention of civil disobedience involved with the rally, stating, "The chancellor has taken his direct action. Now we must take ours...If no satisfactory reply is given by noon, we will begin massive direct action to force the Administration to heed us" ("Showdown"). The demonstration on December 2 was an intensely emotional point for those who were dedicated to the movement. With the threat of defeat looming over them, everyone involved sensed the weight of what was at stake. In a release of frustration and anger, Savio began giving a speech that was very atypical of his style. Strangely it was this speech, and its distance from Savio's normal statements, that received the most attention. It seems that this speech may have been a final plea, calling for the activists to assert their resistance against the powers oppressing them. He incited his audience not only to action, but to martyrdom. He begged them to use their bodies to stop the mechanisms that were oppressing them and so many others. In beginning the speech, Savio directly criticized Kerr, giving his audience an identifiable agent to hold responsible for the inflicted injustices. In his next move he went on to connect the movement at Berkeley with a much broader context, stating that there should be some sense of solidarity between union laborers and students. Going on he began to explain that while they were practicing civil disobedience the dilemma which they faced was one where the people's violation and refusal to accept a law was ineffective in having it repealed. He stated that the only way to overcome such an "arbitrary exercise of arbitrary power" was to physically stop it (Cohen 327). He described this as the "second move of civil disobedience" stating,

There's a time when the operation of the machine becomes so odious, makes you so sick at heart, that you can't take part; you can't even passively take part. And you've got to put your

bodies upon the gears and upon the wheels, upon the levers, upon all the apparatus, and you've got to make it stop. And you've got to indicate to the people who run it, to the people who own it, that unless you're free, the machine will be prevented from working at all! (Savio)

This intensely emotional statement emphasized the university administration as a machine, demonstrating no consideration for the freedom or human rights of the students. After making this statement, charged with imagery, he then went on to say, "One thousand people sitting down someplace not letting anybody by, not letting anything happen, can stop any machine, including this machine, and it will stop!" (Cohen 327). This explanation of the realistic impact that his audience was capable of accomplishing projected a motivational sentiment to the crowd. It is crucial to note that in this statement Savio used the exact imagery from the educational films mentioned previously to promote conformity, in order to provoke radical action against submission within his audience. This was a generation fed up with being told to behave as machinery, failing to question the lives they were living. For this reason, Savio's call to stop the machinery was one of the most effective elements within his message.

As Savio finished making his statement on the steps of Sproul Hall the crowd began to process into the building. Savio had promised that once inside they would hold "real classes" and "Freedom Schools" (Cohen 328). He explained that they would learn about things the university prevented them from understanding, claiming, "We're going to learn about freedom up there, and we're going to learn by doing!" (Cohen 328). Demonstrating the importance of learning about these ideas he explained that if the university was unwilling to allow students a chance to learn about

real issues they were facing then students would hold their own classes. Recordings from inside Sproul Hall that evening portray Savio solidifying the connection between the FSM and the civil rights movement, explaining that in both cases individuals were fighting for “the right to participate as citizens” (Cohen 329). He identified the “greatest problem of our nation” as “depersonalized, unresponsive bureaucracy” (Cohen 329). This statement demonstrated Savio’s frustration with society perpetuated by unquestioning citizens. The American public had been subjected to propaganda manipulating their realities and causing them to become submissive, mechanical beings, operating in response to the skewed truth they had been presented with. They were now faced with a call to forcibly stop the mechanism that had oppressed them for so long. Savio further explained that “the most crucial problems facing the United States” at that time were “the problem of automation and the problem of racial injustice” (Cohen 330). In identifying these two issues, Savio not only prompted his audience towards action, but again strengthened their link to the nationwide struggle for civil rights. He explained to the crowd that although “the bureaucrats hold history as ended” they would always be wrong (Cohen 330). He helped the crowd he addressed that night to understand that history was still open to change. Using the events that the FSM had been involved in, he proved to those listening that through their actions they could achieve change and have an effect on the way the country was being run. Insisting that the unresponsive authority was the source of the problems the country was facing he demanded that activists question the intentions of the bureaucrats and force them to respond to the public’s wishes. He then went on to explain that the appropriate uses of the university were not being fulfilled, and that schools should instead be a place where people grasp a better understanding of the society they live within and begin to question it. Explaining that

questioning social concerns could lead to a better society, he again incited martyrdom as he told the crowd,

The university is the place where people begin seriously to question the conditions of their existence and raise the issue of whether they can be committed to the society they have been born into. After a long period of apathy during the fifties, students have begun not only to question but, having arrived at answers, to act on those answers. This is part of a growing understanding among many people in America that history has not ended, that a better society is possible, and that it is worth dying for (Cohen 331).

This statement makes Savio's moral obligation to the cause very clear, displaying that his true concern regarding the freedom of speech was founded in the quest for the betterment of society. Through mentioning that this would be worth dying for Savio aroused a feeling of sacrifice within his audience. He had linked their cause with civil rights and allowed them to see how their actions could directly affect decisions that were made regarding the state of the country. Through being submissive for too long oppression and persecution had been allowed to run rampant through American society. By helping the activists to see that their cause was bigger than any one individual, he provoked a group to martyr themselves. In addressing his peers with an alternative path and helping them to understand how it could lead to justice, and therefore their salvation, Savio truly fulfilled James Darsey's concept of a prophet. He not only martyred himself to show his commitment to the cause, but his words provoked others to do the same, creating a surge of power that would illuminate this path to the world. The activists understood the depth of the situation as Savio had portrayed it and, due to the importance that

they sensed they allowed themselves to be battered, dragged out of the building, and arrested as authoritative forces entered Sproul Hall that evening.

Understanding that pushing the administration's limits this far would undoubtedly lead to direct action involving police, Savio used this speech to evoke a sense of moral obligation surrounding the cause. He helped the crowd to understand that although they would be subjecting themselves to the threats of the administration and the penalties for breaking the laws involved, they should still continue to practice civil disobedience. He explained to them that their actions would be necessary if they were serious about the change they were demanding. The administration was now dealing with a group of thousands of students willing to suffer whatever repercussions could come their way. The administration may have been able to deal with a few members within the movement realizing the power of their actions, but they seriously underestimated the students' investment in the movement. When Savio called for every member of the movement to realize that the cause was worth their lives in a very literal sense they achieved a level of strength that university officials had no way to combat. By explaining that the responsibility in question rested upon the shoulders of each and every participant in the FSM Savio harnessed a power strong enough to counter the cultural practices he was speaking against. If the goal of a prophet is to enlighten others to the correct path, the path to salvation, it is clear that Savio fulfills that description. He provided the necessary tools, paired with the power of the words he expressed, to provoke others to seek salvation through justice.

CONCLUSION:

When considering the message within *NSC 68* and the educational films addressed here it is interesting to note that the machine imagery used by both was the specific rhetorical device that would be used in their opposition. Ginsberg and Savio latched onto the machine imagery used in efforts to promote the attitude necessary for citizens to adopt during the Cold War and used it to their advantage. Not only did they provide their audiences with the necessary tools to make their statements heard, they used machine imagery to portray the depressing state of individuals in America at that time. Due to its use to communicate a message of conformity within educational films, machinery was an extremely effective image for this purpose. It provided audiences with a concrete portrayal of the concept they were struggling against, while it also aroused emotions regarding the manipulative propaganda citizens had been subjected to. Ginsberg first showed his audience their beauty, independent of the machinery, industrialization, and production they lived within. After he portrayed the sacred value in individuality posed against depressing, lifeless machines it was clear to his audience that conformity would not lead them to salvation. A decade later Savio was able to expand on Ginsberg's message, provoking others to physically put an end to this machine-like existence. Pleading with activists to use their bodies to stop the machinery of an unjust society, Savio chose the imagery used by authorities to shatter the conformist reality they had constructed.

With no room for expression of one's ideas, creative thought was stifled and the discursive formation was seriously limited. With no expression of thought no knowledge could be added to the discursive formation. In order to allow the circulation of information to operate openly, freedom from oppressive forces was essential. In order to combat the persecution that was so prevalent in America during their respective periods

of action, they used radical rhetoric to stir involvement among citizens. By organizing movements in opposition to the conformist attitude being promoted by the government they were able to carve an avenue for change into the existing practices of the country. The perspective that had allowed the government to operate without opposition for so long, performing nuclear testing and waging a war that presented apocalyptic implications, could no longer be tolerated. The limitations that the government placed upon the power of thought as well as the very nature of individuality had to be addressed.

The educational films of the 50s perpetuated the mindset that *NSC 68* had designated as being essential for the support of military build-up necessary to their Cold War strategy. Films directed the country's youth to be submissive to authority, have a strong willingness towards conformity, and to keep their opinions and emotions to themselves. This would allow military officials to operate without question, but it would also relay a perspective of their social situation as a set of unchangeable circumstances. Citizens were led to believe that they could do nothing to change their situation. Truth had been constructed for them as a static entity, and they failed to understand the power that they held. Without understanding that the reality they existed in could change, they were trapped in it. They had no way to escape the oppression due to the fact that they were unaware of any option other than submission.

Foucault suggests that a situation such as this can only be changed by a specific intellectual, possessing experiences that allow him to truly understand things on a fundamental level. Change can only be achieved if attempted at the appropriate time, when the atmosphere has built to a point of revolution. The American public had been subjected to persecution regarding individuality for an overwhelming period of time when Ginsberg finally decided to speak out. Being in a counter cultural Mecca, San Francisco,

allowed him to sense the degree of tension related to social matters. Because of this ability he was able to better judge the climate of the will to revolt among those identifying with his cause. He aimed his rhetoric at a specific group of citizens who he knew would share his opinions and he helped them to understand the power that their words, actions, thoughts, and experiences held. Ginsberg and his fellow Beat poets were dedicated to what they referred to as the “New Vision.” They wanted to “start a cultural movement that would rival the avant-garde movements of the 1920s” (Raskin 86). They sought to attain change through this method based on “vision and madness” as well as “belief in creativity” (Raskin 86). Feeling that a dramatic transformation of values was necessary Ginsberg began creating poetry that would serve the appropriate rhetorical functions to set this vision into motion. Rejecting the submissive state of society he stated, “To me communion was new vision, supreme reality, consciousness” (*Gang of Souls*). This reflects how strongly he felt about the unquestioning nature of American citizens. Through his poetry he was able to reflect the sacred nature of individuality and consciousness, opposed to strictly enforced conformity.

As James Darsey explains a prophetic poet’s purpose is to “enlighten the public and to expand its consciousness” (Darsey 159). It is clear when looking at Ginsberg’s work that he fulfilled this conception perfectly. In order to allow his audience to understand both the gravity of the situation they existed within and realize their potential to change that situation, he addressed them in the poetic form. Darsey states that “poetic diction has, in many cultures throughout history, served as evidence of divine election”(Darsey 156). For this reason it was extremely appropriate that Ginsberg chose poetry to deliver his message concerning the sacred aspects of humanity. As a rhetorical device it captured the depth of his message perfectly and allowed him the opportunity to openly present the necessary tools to his audience.

Through his display of public speaking, expression of opinion, and his use of shock appeal and profanity, he was able to demonstrate the power that each citizen in the United States held. As an ordinary member of the public his impact could make a greater impression upon those who heard his message. His connection to the common man made it easy for his audience to grasp the fact that they could make their opinions known in the exact same way. If Ginsberg could find a way to voice his opinions in the face of persecution they could too. And the level of importance he placed upon individual experiences and ideas through both his writings and actions demonstrated the necessity of others to do the same. If he was willing to sacrifice himself facing persecution, censorship, and legal repercussions then they should be willing to as well. It is important to note that Ginsberg did not call his audience to martyr themselves in the same way that Savio did for a very specific reason. Due to the fact that he was building a foundation for counter cultural movements in a horrifically oppressive atmosphere it was an inappropriate time to push others to that extreme. The stakes were simply too high at that time. Instead Ginsberg understood that it was important to first help people see that they could be expressive of their individuality at all, or that they could have thoughts of their own. In an environment where citizens felt that they did not have the authority to think critically about decisions that affected their daily lives it was essential to first let them know that their experiences as citizens of this country gave them that authority. Ginsberg fostered understanding that the experiences of each individual were of extreme importance. They shouldn't be suppressed along with opinions and emotions. Each citizen in this country had important knowledge to share and Ginsberg helped them to see the value of expressing those ideas. Through demonstrating the power that his own voice and actions held and the impact they were able to have upon those who were able to hear them, he illuminated a path to individuality in the midst of a conformist environment. He displayed the presence of a counter cultural current to his

audience showing them that an alternative lifestyle was possible and organization was the key to achieving it.

Ginsberg's actions set the stage for countless instances of revolution against social standards. The group that he identified with expanded as the movement progressed. The inclusive nature of the rhetoric that Ginsberg popularized spread throughout various counter cultural revolts. Through demonstrating the tools necessary to make one's statement carry the appropriate impact Ginsberg provoked an uprising against suppressive authority in this country. These movements did not only desire the ability to voice their own message, they eventually used the tools proven to be effective in order to speak for others who had not yet achieved that power. Movements centered around the sacred value of the individual consciousness expanded to encompass ideas such as civil rights and America's extreme use of violent force. Once this counter culture harnessed the ability to be heard they took full advantage of the power that it afforded them. Through openly expressing their opinions and asserting their power to speak, they could reach an infinite amount of people as they achieved the power to be heard. The more people who could be addressed regarding these issues of injustice, the greater impact they could have as a group. There was strength in numbers and the movement used that strength against the atrocities being committed around them.

The Free Speech Movement was able to latch onto the momentum that Ginsberg had launched into action. Having already helped his audience to understand that counter cultural thought did exist, Ginsberg laid the foundation for the movement that Mario Savio would perpetuate. Due to the fact that Ginsberg's actions had achieved this much, Savio was able to push things a bit further. Backed by counter cultural figures throughout the years past, Savio's audience understood the importance of martyrdom for a cause. They had watched as Ginsberg, among others, was persecuted and

condemned for the message he was spreading and the shocking profanity and subject matter used to express it. Savio knew that in order to create a substantial change regarding their situation they would all have to be ready to suffer the most extreme consequences that would accompany that shift. Previous movements had proven that change would not come easily. If students at Berkeley, as well as citizens across the nation, wanted to achieve success regarding their cause they could not let the violent oppression they were faced with stop them. Sacrifice had become an essential factor surrounding the movement. For this reason Savio's method of inciting his audience to martyrdom proved to be extremely effective. The unity that Ginsberg had accomplished was crucial and Savio ran with it. Not only did he ask those listening to come together in order to fight for free expression, but to be ready to sacrifice themselves in whatever way would prove necessary. Their willingness to endure physical harm, legal repercussions, and severe social persecution would be essential to their success. Statements Savio made publicly during the Free Speech Movement make it clear how aware he was of the need for this extreme dedication. He helped those fighting for the cause to understand that without self-sacrifice their efforts would be in vain. As he explained to the activists that without a response and direct action they would be "dead" he conveyed the extreme necessity involved (Cohen 176). His audience was able to grasp the fact that merely speaking about their concerns would no longer suffice. The time had come to show that they physically would not allow their country to operate in such an unjust manner any longer. If their message was not being heard it was time to cause a disturbance large enough to force the oppressive authorities of this country to listen. The sit-ins that were held during the Free Speech Movement, as well as the peaceful seizing of the police car in Sproul Plaza are examples of the radical actions provoked by Savio's statements regarding the cause. He helped the activists to understand the need of disruptive action and civil disobedience in order to halt the operations they disagreed with.

Allen Ginsberg and Mario Savio are two examples of individuals who used radical rhetoric to strengthen the impact of their messages and further the success of the movements they identified with. Through charismatic and pragmatic practices they were able to succeed in provoking radical action in those able to hear and identify with their messages. Attempting to obtain the changes they saw as necessary for salvation they behaved as specific intellectuals seeking to prompt transformation through the knowledge of their own experiences. Providing the tools necessary to be heard and understood they helped give their audiences the momentum to forge a counter cultural revolution against the status quo of American society. Identifying with a group that had been told they had no place in this country, they helped those deemed as outsiders to understand that others shared their opinions and valued their experiences. There was no reason to hide any longer. Due to the actions of Ginsberg and Savio citizens who had been “othered” were finally able to understand that they were valuable members of society. After years of persecution and manipulative propaganda people had been conditioned to believe that anything other than conformity was unacceptable. Through the knowledge of these radical options which had not before been utilized those who heard and believed the message of these men found the strength to stand up for their way of life as opposed to conforming to the lifestyle being imposed upon them. Due to their insistence upon freedom of expression citizens developed an avenue to speak out against the ignorance and injustice in America. The circulation of knowledge that was made possible helped art to thrive and allowed the discursive formation at that time to grow considerably. Ideas were able to be discussed and experiences and opinions were expressed allowing a new reality to replace the one issued by the propaganda spurred by NSC 68 and Cold War terror. A realistic view of the human condition was revealed, proving that everyone was not perfect and average humans did have problems and emotions.

Without the actions of Ginsberg and Savio the counter cultural path of this country would have been much different. Taking advantage of the situations they were in and the opportunities that their timing afforded them they tirelessly sought the transformation that they saw possible. Expressing their messages and helping others to understand the value in their individual opinions as well as the power of their unification, Ginsberg and Savio managed to create the atmosphere necessary for their conceptions of reality to make headway. Understanding that through agreement change could be accomplished they helped their audiences to see that the “reality” they had been subjected to did not leave room for individuals to express their opinions or emotions regarding experiences. Their very presence demonstrated the inconsistency of the “reality” perpetuated through propaganda. These men made it possible for individuality to exist, shattering what had been a suppressive environment insisting upon strict conformity. Without their actions creativity and knowledge would have remained restricted and individuality would have continued to suffer under the oppressive constriction of authoritative forces.

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