

**Ginsberg's *Howl*: Language on Trial / O Uivo de Ginsberg: a linguagem em julgamento**

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**ABSTRACT**

In this article, I take the trial of the work *Howl* by Allen Ginsberg – which took place in the USA, in 1957 – as a starting point to discuss issues concerning language that were raised throughout the legal proceedings. During the trial, matters were questioned ranging from the organization and functioning of the poetic language to what can be said or not according to the impositions of a society. Therefore, the aim of this text is to discuss some of these matters, based on the reflections and ideas of the linguist Émile Benveniste and some of the readers of his work, such as Gérard Dessons and Henri Meschonnic.

**KEYWORDS:** *Howl*; Ginsberg; Benveniste; Poetic Language; The Ethical and the Political

**RESUMO**

*Neste artigo, tomo o julgamento da obra *Howl* [Uivo], de Allen Ginsberg, ocorrido em 1957, nos EUA, como ponto de partida para discussões sobre linguagem, levantadas durante o processo. No decorrer do julgamento, questões que concernem desde a organização e funcionamento da linguagem poética até ao que pode ser dito ou não de acordo com as imposições de uma sociedade foram colocadas em questão. Busco, neste texto, portanto, discutir algumas dessas questões suscitadas por tal debate à luz de reflexões e apontamentos propostos pelo linguista Émile Benveniste e leitores de sua obra, tais como Gérard Dessons e Henri Meschonnic.*

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Uivo; Ginsberg; Benveniste; Linguagem poética; O ético e o político

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Unscrew the locks from the doors!  
Unscrew the doors themselves from their jambs!  
Walt Whitman

## Introduction

Howl, a poem from the work *Howl and other poems*, Allen Ginsberg's debut in 1956, was intended<sup>1</sup> to be configured as a cry that denounced the elements of the society of the time, as stated by Lawrence Ferlinghetti (2006), using the words of Mark Schorer, and which, according to the poet, destroyed the best qualities of human nature and the best minds. These elements can be described as materialism, conformity, and mechanization that led to war.

However, this Howl ended up also becoming a cry for freedom of expression. Firstly, there was an attempt to seize the first publications that had been produced in the United Kingdom and that arrived in ships in the USA. Then, a clerk from a bookshop, whose owner had been responsible for editing and publishing the work, was arrested for selling the book that had been considered "obscene" by undercover policemen who bought the work. Finally, the State of California sued the clerk, the bookshop and publishing house owner in 1957, Shigeyoshi Murao and Lawrence Ferlinghetti, respectively.

Howl's trial became a milestone in the USA. After the decision rendered by the judge, who did not consider the work obscene as the prosecution intended, "a series of court decisions began to remove restrictions on purportedly obscene literature" (Morgan; Peters, 2006, p.5).

Many questions about language arose during the trial since the main issue discussed was Howl and the need to determine whether it was obscene or not. Such questions enclosed everything from the functioning and configuration of the poetic language to the limits determined by society in relation to what can be expressed or not.

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<sup>1</sup> The translation of the word *intenté* was used here based on the use by the linguist Émile Benveniste (1981 and 2006c), to refer to an intention that is not configured as prior, but that is built at the same time that the discourse is configured.

Such issues still provoke debates in our society and therefore are current and of great relevance, especially at this moment when we are witnessing an attempt to curtail freedoms not only in Brazil, but also around the world. Thus, the objective of this text is to retake such debates considering the point of view about language constructed in the work of Émile Benveniste, with the support of his readers.

## 1 The Poetic Language in Debate

In this first section, the discussion is related to some issues raised at the trial and directly linked to what is called here “poetic language.” At first, the book was deemed obscene by the prosecutors, due to its addressing of some sensitive topics and the use of some words, among them, “fuck.” However, since the beginning of the legal proceedings, it was determined that, to be condemned, the work should be considered obscene as a whole, not only regarding the use of a few words. That was what led to questions about its literary value. Thus, the reflections that follow are elaborated to address such questions which arose during the trial.

To this end, it is important to start with the text *The Semiology of Language*,<sup>2</sup> by Émile Benveniste, originally published in 1969. In this text, as noted by Meschonnic (2008) and Dessons (1997), the linguist begins a discussion that will become important to think art and the poetic language. When comparing several semiological systems, among them art, to define what is proper to the language, Benveniste (1981)<sup>3</sup> proposes that the language is the only signifying system to have the property of assembling at once the semiotic domain and the semantic domain.<sup>4</sup> The other systems are either constituted only by the semiotics, gestures of politeness, *mudras*, or they are constituted only by the semantics, such as artistic expressions.

Still in this text, according to Meschonnic (2008), Benveniste makes a dissociation between the notion of sign and that of unit. It is important to note that, in *The Semiology of Language*, the sign presents itself as a unit, however, a unit would not necessarily be a

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<sup>2</sup> BENVENISTE, É. *The Semiology of Language*. *Semiotica*, Berlin, vol. 37, no. s1, pp.5-24, 1981.

<sup>3</sup> For reference, see footnote 2.

<sup>4</sup> Benveniste (1981) characterizes the semiotic domain as that consisted of linguistic signs, which form a system; the semantic domain, on the other hand, is the one in which the unit is the discourse itself, which attributes value to the parts, to the words.

sign. Hence, it is possible to consider, for example, works of art as units that produce meaning, which cannot have their elements discretized since they are not constituted of units that would have a previously given value.

In the wake of this reflection, the proposals of both Meschonnic (2008) and Dessons (1997)<sup>5</sup> point to a new work methodology. Generally, in language studies, works started from analyzes in which units charged with meaning were considered. These units, in turn, could be altered according to the new relations established through discourse; the studies of other systems, those of artistic expression, pointed out, via Benveniste (1981),<sup>6</sup> that the work of art should be considered as a whole and that whole would attribute relation to its parts. It can thus be said that it is a consideration of the work based on what was called “semantics without semiotics,” in which the work of art creates its own semiotics. In an artistic work with language, it is its own universe that is responsible for the constitution of the value that is attributed to its parts.

When considering the study of the poetic language, Meschonnic proposes to consider the poem<sup>7</sup> as a work of language. Thus, the language theorist considers the poem as a work of art in his analyzes, as the one that builds its own semiotics, stemming from the domain of semantics. Benveniste (2011, p.652, emphasis in original), designing a similar path in manuscripts<sup>8</sup> states that “colors, matter, sounds are the materials / of artists, painters, sculptors, musicians,” “and the poet? The poet combines *words* / they are the

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<sup>5</sup> It is important to note that this discussion runs through the work of Henri Meschonnic and Gérard Dessons, both readers of Benveniste’s work. These texts are specifically mentioned, at this point, because they will directly assist the reflection carried here.

<sup>6</sup> For reference, see footnote 2.

<sup>7</sup> The notion of poem is taken here according to Dessons’s terms (2011), for whom the poem should not necessarily be written in verse, because even if the verse has historically been the form of the poem for many centuries, it has not been so since the idea of poetry had been changed in the 17th century, when the prose versification had appeared, resulting in the prose poetry in the 19th century. Thus, the poem is considered as the text that invents a new form and a new meaning, it is a creation.

<sup>8</sup> I refer here to Benveniste’s handwritten notes, published in France, by Chloé Laplantine in 2011. These notes reveal Benveniste’s attempt to analyze Charles Baudelaire’s *Les Fleurs du Mal* to understand what is proper to the poetic language. Given that the linguist, in his notes, increasingly points to the reflection that it is the language of a poet, the language of Baudelaire, the dossier was named by Laplantine, *Baudelaire*.

material he works on. It is then / evident that, when they become material for the poet, the words can no longer / be the ‘signs’<sup>9</sup> of ordinary use.”<sup>10</sup>

Such ideas seem to find an echo in Benveniste (1971),<sup>11</sup> in the text *Remarks on the Function of Language in Freudian Theory*, originally published in 1956. In this text, Benveniste (1971, p.72),<sup>12</sup> when considering Freud’s attempt to find a discourse analogous to the language of the unconscious and dreams to understand them, states that what “Freud asked in vain of ‘historical’ language he could have asked to a certain extent of myth or poetry.”

The Syrian linguist’s statement is made after his own attempt to characterize the language of the unconscious. For Benveniste (1971),<sup>13</sup> in addition to the symbolism inherent to language, the analyst can perceive that there is a specific symbolism, which is constituted both from what he omits and from what he enunciates, without the subject’s knowledge. Furthermore, Benveniste (1971, p.68)<sup>14</sup> considers that “Freud cast significant light upon verbal activity as revealed in its lapses, in its play aspects, and in its free wanderings when the power of repression is suspended,” therefore, “all the anarchical force that is repressed or sublimated in normal language is rooted in the unconscious.”

Freud, according to Benveniste (1971, p.68),<sup>15</sup> observed that there was “deep affinity between these forms of language and the nature of the associations that are made in dreams (another expression of unconscious motivations).” Continuing his reflection, Benveniste brings Freud’s words in direct quotation, to whom “This symbolism” “is not peculiar to dreams; but is characteristic of unconscious ideation, in particular among the people, and it is to be found in folklore, and in popular myths, legends, linguistic idioms, proverbial wisdom, and current jokes to a more complete extent than in dreams” (Benveniste, 1971, p.74).<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> In Saussure, as in Benveniste, *sign* refers to the unit of the system, which when used in discourse, in speech, becomes a *word*. In this passage, the word *sign* appears in quotation marks, in order to denote a certain opposition between ordinary language and poetic language. The first would start from units of the system, that is, from the *sign*, the second would conceive its system, from the use of *words*.

<sup>10</sup> In Portuguese: “As cores, a matéria, os sons são os materiais / dos artistas pintores, escultores, músicos”, “E o poeta? O poeta combina palavras / são o material sobre o qual ele trabalha. É então / evidente que, tornadas material do poeta, as palavras não / podem mais ser os ‘signos’ do uso comum.”

<sup>11</sup> BENVENISTE, É. *Problems in General Linguistics*. Translated by Mary Elizabeth Meek. Coral Gables: Miami University Press, 1971.

<sup>12</sup> For reference, see footnote 11.

<sup>13</sup> For reference, see footnote 11.

<sup>14</sup> For reference, see footnote 11.

<sup>15</sup> For reference, see footnote 11.

<sup>16</sup> For reference, see footnote 11.

The observations on the poetic language presented by Meschonnic and Dessons, based on Benveniste's reflection, relating it to the language of the unconscious and of the dream, find echo in Ginsberg's own words about his poetic work, in a letter sent to John Hollander, after the latter wrote a derogatory criticism about Howl:

I mean that in watching natural thought (like in meditation Buddhist type) you see the structure of your random seeming thought and you can build whole prose or poetry structures on it. Not without effort at first, for it takes immense self discipline and effort to learn not to think (IBM) but to meditate and watch thought without interrupting it by literary self-consciousness and embarrassed preconceptions and rules (Morgan; Peters, 2006, pp.93-94; emphasis in original).

Based on the theoretical discussion presented, the proposal developed here is to try to consider the functioning of the poetic language as that perceived in the domain of artistic expressions.

## **2 *Howl*, by Ginsberg**

The poem is, then, a work of language. Thus, extending the reflection about the work of art to the work of language, we realize that “confusing the significance of a plastic work with the lexical designation of its components results not only in abandoning the system of the work of art, but above all, in the introduction of discontinuity into a system in which no unit is discrete” (Dessons, 1997, p.328).<sup>17</sup> It would therefore be impossible to evaluate a work of language through the selection of the words used in that work. Along the same lines, it is clear that it would not be possible for some words used in Howl to be replaced by euphemisms, as it was conjectured for a few moments both in Ginsberg's correspondences and in the arguments made during the trial.

Benveniste (2011, p.308; emphasis in original) states that “the poet *makes* his language and his expression, even / when he takes the elements from the ordinary language.”<sup>18</sup> However, there are no isolated signs that can be considered in themselves as

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<sup>17</sup> In French: “confondre la signification d'une œuvre plastique avec la désignation lexicale de ses composantes a pour conséquence non seulement la sortie hors du système de l'œuvre, mais surtout, l'introduction de la discontinuité dans un système dont aucune unité n'est discrète.”

<sup>18</sup> In French: “Le poète fait sa langue et son expression, même / quand il en prend les éléments dans la langue ordinaire.”

belonging to the poetic language, or that have a poetic effect, as everything is in the set of the work (Benveniste, 2011).

The linguist also points out, in his manuscripts, that the material used by the poet is in the dictionary, “save / rare exception, all the words of Baudelaire, of Mallarmé, / are individually in the dictionary” (Benveniste, 2011, p.444).<sup>19</sup> And yet, “it is not the same language” (Benveniste, 2011, p.444).<sup>20</sup> Such statements allow Benveniste to affirm that “each poet has / their own poetic language” (Benveniste, 2011, p.454).<sup>21</sup>

Therefore, it is not a question, regarding a work of art, of “constant general conditions, but of individual characteristics,” in this sense, “the artist creates his own semiotics” (Benveniste, 1981, pp.15-6).<sup>22</sup> As Dessons (1997, p.330) points out, “‘to signify’, from the point of view of the semantic mode, does not refer to a ‘meaning’, but radically to a situation: ‘The meaning of the sentence implies reference to the speech situation and to the speaker’s attitude’,<sup>23</sup> which leads to making the subject, history and language inseparable.”<sup>24</sup>

Thus, this personal semiotics in the work of art, specifically artistic language as is our case, is inseparably “a matter and a way, a matter informed in a way that the structure and [the construction] make it meaningful” (Dessons, 1997, p.333).<sup>25</sup> It is precisely this attempt to produce a work as a unit, which produces its own semantics and its own semiotics, that we perceive in Ginsberg’s own words in the letter to John Hollander aforementioned.

The poet states that in an attempt to keep the language sufficiently dense, he used a “primitive naive grammar (expelled for crazy)”, eliminated “prosy articles and syntactical sawdust, juxtaposition of cubic style images, or hot rhythm.” (Morgan; Peters, 2006, p.87). He also explains that “[he] changed [his] mind about ‘measure’ while

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<sup>19</sup> In French: “sauf / exception rare, tous les mots de Baudelaire, de Mallarmé, / sont individuellement dans le dictionnaire.”

<sup>20</sup> In French: “ce n’est pas la même langue.”

<sup>21</sup> In French: “chaque poète a / sa langue poétique.”

<sup>22</sup> For reference, see footnote 2.

<sup>23</sup> In French: La forme et le sens dans le langage, PLG II, p.225 (“‘signifier’, du point de vue du mode sémantique, ne réfère pas à un ‘sens’, mais, radicalement, à une situation: ‘Les sens de la phrase implique référence à la situation de discours, et l’attitude du locuteur’”; “ce qui revient à rendre indissociables le sujet, l’histoire et le langage.”)

<sup>24</sup> In French: “‘signifier’, du point de vue du mode sémantique, ne réfère pas à un “sens”, mais, radicalement, à une situation: ‘Les sens de la phrase implique référence à la situation de discours, et l’attitude du locuteur’; ce qui revient à rendre indissociables le sujet, l’histoire et le langage.”

<sup>25</sup> In French: “une matière et une manière, une matière informée de manière qui la structure et la rend signifiante.”

writing” (Morgan; Peters, 2006, p.87), so, in part I of the poem, what set the rhythm was the basic repetition of “who,” as a “kithara BLANG,” while in part II, the repeated word was “Moloch,” but also the rhythm would have been guaranteed by a break of long lines by short sentences with rhythmic punctuation. In part III, according to the poet, there would be an “original invention,” in which a rhythmically based phrase (I’m with you, etc) would be followed, as in a litany, by an answer of the same extension (where you’re madder, etc), which would be repeated and would slowly stretch, “building up like a pyramid, an emotion crying siren sound, very appropriate to the expressive appeal emotion” (Morgan; Peters, 2006, p.88).

This construction that implies form and meaning inseparably is really, in many of the poet’s own statements, a problem to be thought about and rethought. The construction of Howl’s universe leads Ginsberg to affirm: “The more I look at it the worse it seems, it’s real bad this way, I mean you can’t tell what I am doing, it looks like just primitive random scribblings in pages. I had not intended the prosody to be that arbitrary” (Morgan; Peters, 2006, p.44).

Ginsberg, both in the construction of his work and in the statements he writes in letters, points out that “any poem I write that I have written before, in which I don’t discover something new (psychically) and maybe formally, is a waste of time, it’s not living” (Morgan; Peters, 2006, p.98).

This living *in* and *through* language, in which the poet discovers himself as he discovers ideas, new ways of thinking and of acting, finds echo in the definition proposed by D’Alembert (1763) of “*expression de génie*” [expression of geniality]. According to D’Alembert (1793), this is not a matter of a new word, dictated by singularity or laziness, it is, rather, the necessary and skillful encounter with known vocabulary to energetically introduce a new idea.

To do so, Ginsberg needs to use in Howl “rhythms of ordinary speech,” a “diction of ordinary speech,” as well as “language of vulgarity,” as pointed out by Schroder, professor of English at the University of California (Morgan; Peters, 2006, p.98).

The language work of art is, therefore, a system, whose signifying property is rendered by its own semiotics and semantics. This makes it impossible for the analysis to be made from the point of view of semiotics only, that is, considering words based on the criterion of shared meaning. However, adopting the point of view of the semantics



without semiotics to analyze a language work of art leads us to realize that Ginsberg's *Howl* not only creates a way of saying things, but it also builds its own way of saying them. In *Howl* meaning is built based on the inseparability between form and meaning, which constitutes the poetic experience as a language adventure. From the point of view of the semantics, it is about "opening to the world," which is "completely unpredictable" (Benveniste, 2006b, p.21).<sup>26</sup>

Thereby, it is not possible, as the prosecutors wanted in the legal proceedings related to Ginsberg's *Howl*, to reduce it to what Benveniste called the "semiotic mode" of the language, for, as Dessons observed (1997, p.333), "an art object exceeds the totality of its signs," and this excess "is neither an unspeakable (...) nor an imperceptible,"<sup>27</sup> however, it does not fit in an attempt to analyze texts and works in a univocal way.

It is, rather, an attempt, in *Howl*, to constitute a world of its own, in which the poet's experience is evoked, from his personal experience, from an emotional experience. To do so, it was necessary to force the limits imposed by the language, it was necessary to invent a new way of saying, so that the poem would not only say something, but produce an effect.

In addition to the difficulty of defining what is "obscene," as the trial in question proposed, a work of language cannot be taken in a univocal way, considering that this opening to the world, this excess, characteristic and constitutive of a work of language, points to the plurality of meanings and interpretations that can be made of it.

### **3 The Ethical and the Political in Language**

The point of view from which a work of language is taken always reveals an ethical and a political position. It would be no different in the discussion proposed in this article. The view from which the questions raised at the trial are taken reveals not only a conception of language, but also a conception of art, in which the latter derives from the former.

Language understood from the point of view of the discourse, of the semantic domain, to use Benveniste's terms, places language as inseparable from the subject and

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<sup>26</sup> In Portuguese: "É a abertura para o mundo; isto é absolutamente imprevisível."

<sup>27</sup> In French: "un objet d'art excède la totalité de ses signes ; ni un indicible (...), ni un imperceptible."

from history. It is in language taken as discourse that there is the possibility of subjectivation, since, according to Benveniste, the notion of semantics:

introduces us to the domain of language in employment and in action; this time we see in language its mediating function between man and man, between man and the world, between the spirit and things, transmitting information, communicating experience, imposing adherence, eliciting the response, begging, embarrassing; in short, organizing the whole life of men (Benveniste, 2006b, p.229).<sup>28</sup>

This conception of language is at the basis of the definition of art proposed by Baudelaire, as noted by Meschonnic (2006). Baudelaire (1980) defined “*l’art pur*” [the pure art] as the creation of a suggestive magic, which contains both the object and the subject, the world outside the artist and the artist himself. Thus, in Baudelaire (1980), according to Meschonnic (2006), it is impossible to dissociate identity from alterity. Language constitutes the *self* and the *other* at the same time. It is *in* and *through* language that man and society are built, inseparably.

Therefore, when Baudelaire speaks of art, he speaks first and foremost about life (Meschonnic, 1988). The concept of beauty in art is replaced by the concept of ethical, as beauty in language becomes an adventure of historicity (Meschonnic, 2006), that is, the concept of beauty is closely linked to the process of individuation.

Based on the idea that language and art are conceived as processes of individuation, as observed in Benveniste and Baudelaire, it can be said that each and every work of language is built at the encounter of language, the ethical and the political. Each and every work of language builds its own universe, based on the inseparability between identity and alterity, which produces an effect in reality, since it promotes the structuring of interpersonal relationships. The ethical and the political therefore refer to individuation and, consequently, to this effect in the structuring of relationships in society.

Hence, Ginsberg’s *Howl* did not produce the strangeness that led to the accusation of obscenity only due to the use of language, nor to the fact that the work innovated in formal poem writing criteria, as the prosecutors tried to claim. This way of saying, built

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<sup>28</sup> In Portuguese: “nos introduz no domínio da língua em emprego e em ação; vemos desta vez na língua sua função mediadora entre o homem e o homem, entre o homem e o mundo, entre o espírito e as coisas, transmitindo a informação, comunicando a experiência, impondo a adesão, suscitando a resposta, implorando, constringendo; em resumo, organizando toda a vida dos homens.”

by very specific language and form, attacked “the bare roots of our dominant culture, the very Moloch<sup>29</sup> heart of our consumer society” (Morgan; Peters, 2006, p.xi).

Besides, the work presented sexual content, especially homosexual. Ginsberg, in a letter to Richard Eberhart, describes *Howl* as the “‘affirmation’ of individual experience of God, sex, drugs, absurdity etc.” (Morgan; Peters, 2006, p.40). The poem also describes and rejects the Moloch of society, accused of confusing and suppressing individual experiences and of considering crazy the ones do not reject their deepest senses. The poet states that “the criticism of society is that ‘Society’ is merciless,” so the alternative is “private, individual acts of mercy;” it is basically a poem “clearly and consciously built on a *liberation* of basic human virtues” (Morgan; Peters, 2006, p.40).

It was Ginsberg’s daring to live-write via language which presented itself as an innovation in relation not only to language, to the form of the poem, but also to the construction of new ideas instigating new ways of acting and thinking, which led the work to trial. It was the conception of art that *Howl* uses, as one that transforms the everyday, the rejected, the common, into sacred, as one that gives voice and time to what is repressed and rejected, that brought the work into trial.

The obscenity of the work was not proven at the trial due to the fact that the prosecution failed to demonstrate it. The questioning of the literary value could not be sustained either, since just a few of the experts who witnessed it discarded its literary value. The arguments of those few experts were based on a conception of art, according to certain pre-determined beauty standards.

*Howl*’s trial shed light on the debate concerning what is considered art in society and how language is understood. The work itself brought into play a conception of art and language closely linked to the individuation process, in which individuation is confused with alterity. *Howl*’s trial highlighted its ethical and political character, critically revealing what was at stake in the production of this new saying, constituted by the invention of new forms and new meanings.

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<sup>29</sup> Ginsberg uses the word “Moloch” in *Howl*. This expression figuratively refers to a person or something that demands a high sacrifice. In the case of the poem, “Moloch” is related to everything that is described as degrading in society in order to intensify the accusation proposed by the poem.

## Final Words

In this text, questions about language, especially poetic language, were discussed based on what was raised at the trial of Ginsberg's *Howl*. Throughout the debate, reflections on language according to Benveniste were considered with the support of other readers, such as Gérard Dessons and Henri Meschonnic.

To this end, the discussion on how poetic language is organized and configured was set to then allow us to think about the construction and organization of *Howl*, especially from the debates and discussions held during the trial and from texts and correspondences published on the topic in Morgan and Peters's (2006).

Finally, the reflection on the ethical and the political character of language was raised, seeking to draw attention to the fact that, although the work had been questioned regarding the use of expressions and its form of composition, it also has a socio-cultural impact. The work innovates by renewing its form, which energetically introduces new ideas, new ways of thinking. It is in this encounter among language, the ethical and the political that the founding power of language and its ability to cause effects is located with full strength.

*Howl* and its trial call into question the fact that language is not monolithic, works of language and works of art cannot be taken based on a standardized concept of beauty, but only on their movement towards individuation. Consequently, the work of art and its respective trial highlight the plural and diverse character of culture and society.

However, initiatives to consider language, art, culture, and society from what constitutes them, that is, based on their plurality, triggered and has continuously triggered attacks from more conservative sectors and movements of society. Such movements seek to build a monolithic view of language, art, culture, and society, based on the judgement arising from a dualistic point of view that is imprisoned between "right" and "wrong."

In Brazil, we witnessed a scene similar to that provided by Ginsberg's *Howl*, during the closing of the exhibition *Queermuseu*, at Santander Cultural, in Porto Alegre in 2017. The arguments were very similar, when groups and movements tried to associate the exhibit to pedophilia and zoophilia through the highlighting of elements from only five works in the entire exhibition.

These scenes motivated this text, which, hopefully, is an invitation to other reflections concerning everything that these debates put on display – language, the work of language, art, culture, society, and its constitution. Taking language as individuation and, therefore, in its creative power, can shed new light on thinking about such issues, based on their plural character. Starting this debate was the intention promoted here.

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### **Reviews**

#### **Review I**

The text presents an interesting discussion and a very unique approach to Benveniste's work, focusing on works aimed at the so-called “poetic language.” It takes as its base two excellent readers of the Benvenistian work, Meschonnic and Dessons, and moves it to think about the poem. The article is well written, authored and reveals knowledge of these current studies on Benveniste. The only point that stands out is the lack of reference to current studies, produced in Brazil, about the same approach. The author chooses to ignore the field's bibliography, carried out within the scope of reflection by Brazilian experts. Without a doubt, it is an option that impoverishes academic dialogue. However, it is fair to admit that the text fulfills, strictly speaking, its objectives. It's the opinion.

ACCEPTED

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#### **Review II**

The title – “The Howl of Ginsberg: the language on trial / O Uivo de Ginsberg: a linguagem em julgamento” – is well suited to the article. The objective of the work – to discuss issues about language, especially poetic language, based on what was raised in the judgment of Howl, by Ginsberg – is developed coherently throughout the article. For this, it uses Émile Benveniste's theoretical-methodological reflections, to think above all about the relationship between the ethical and political character of language and poetic

language, as well as being supported by precise readers of Benveniste, such as Gérard Dessons and Henri Meschonnic. From the analysis of Howl's work and his judgment, a significant conclusion is found, that of showing that it is in the “encounter among language, ethics and politics that the founding power of language and its capacity to cause effects takes action.” Thus, within the chosen field of knowledge, there is a choice of pertinent, up-to-date and relevant bibliography. There is a certain originality in relating language, art, culture and society based on their plurality, that is, on what constitutes them. The article brings relevant contributions to discursive studies, among which: that of highlighting the functioning of poetic language, in the case of the article based on the poem as a work of language, as that perceived in the field of artistic expressions; that of showing that in Ginsberg's Howl significance is constructed from the inseparability between form and meaning, which constitutes poetic experience as an appropriation of language. The text is well written, there is clarity from start to finish. The language is suitable for scientific work. The article is, therefore, accepted.  
ACCEPTED

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### **Final Remark**

Considering the opinions above, the article “Ginsberg's Howl: Language on Trial” is ACCEPTED. Please read carefully the guidelines with the next steps for editing and publishing the article in *Bakhtiniana. Journal of Discourse Studies*.