

## Allen Ginsberg Research

Allen Ginsberg was an influential and revolutionary poet in the mid-20th century. His skills as a writer only amplified his ability to speak about issues of the time and his own life through poetry. He was a member of the “beat generation” of poets, which also included such lauded writers as Jack Kerouac and William Burroughs. The term “beat” mainly refers to the style of poetry those writers utilized—they describe it as “being hit over the head [with poetry]”.<sup>1</sup>



(Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac were instrumental in the beat generation)

Until the beat generation, poetry had usually been more conservative in both style and topic. Ginsberg was very leftist, however, to the point that he shared many beliefs with the Communist Party. He opposed materialism, war, and conformity in general.<sup>2</sup> But these beliefs created friction at the time (1950s) between government and himself, and in 1956, his poem titled “Howl” was seized by the police.<sup>3</sup> Another one of his famous poems, “America”, also led to a wide disparity of reactions; traditionalists found the personification and satire distasteful and offensive to the American capitalist attitude. However, people of counter-culture, which were mainly young people and the Hippies, bought into Ginsberg’s portrayal of America as a living organism that behaves with much the same idiosyncrasies as humans. Ginsberg offered a deeper

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<sup>1</sup> Hampton, Willborn (April 6, 1997). "Allen Ginsberg, Master Poet Of Beat Generation, Dies at 70". New York Times.

<sup>2</sup> de Grazia, Edward. (1992) *Girls Lean Back Everywhere: The Law of Obscenity and the Assault on Genius*. New York: Random House, pp. 330–31.

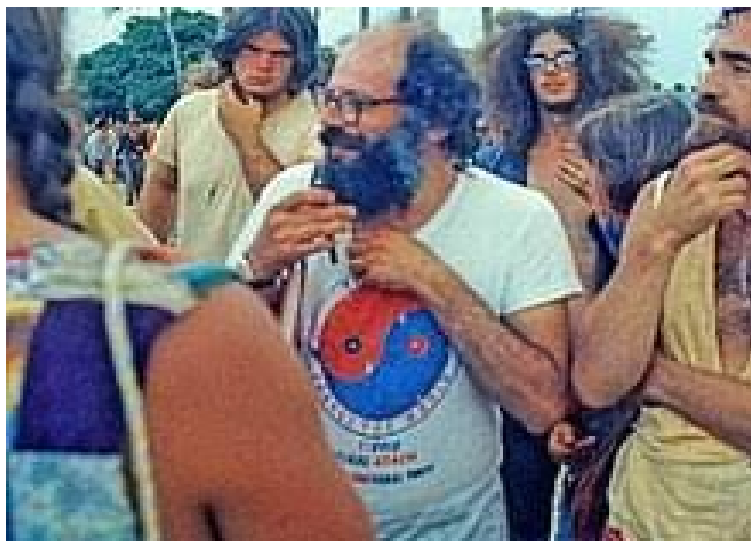
<sup>3</sup> "Ginsberg, Allen (1926-1997)". *gltq.com*. Archived from the original on March 13, 2007. Retrieved 9 August 2015.

look into how America really ran, and ironically this also offered a look into the mirror for ourselves.



(Ginsberg publicly read his poetry)

His style of using non-traditional emotions to depict anything from homosexual rights to war protesting became a trend throughout his poems. He used this to speak out against sexual rigidity; he was gay in a time where he was not accepted in most parts of America. In fact, many writers have credited Ginsberg for giving them the courage to be open about their homosexuality (<https://english.colostate.edu/news/lgbt-history-month-allen-ginsberg/>). And although he did not lead the anti-vietnam movement per se, he was a significant voice in it. His poetry often puts down war in general, usually in a sarcastic manner, which helped appeal to a wide variety of readers. Ginsberg was a modern poet in a time of rapid change, and he embraced that reality to describe and critique the world around him.



(Ginsberg was a leading social activist)