

Good essay about the beats generation

[Countries](#), [United States](#)



The beats generation represents a time when a group of famous writers were highlighted for their work. The writers represented a time after the Second World War and showcased the issues that affected society at the time (Docherty, Brian, 84). The 1950s was a time that was coupled with a lot of cultural, economic and political issues. The writers, who were American, wrote about such issues in an effort to condemn and educate about them. One such writer is Allen Ginsberg. He was born in Jersey in 1936 and was raised by an English teacher who influenced his background that led to his becoming famous in the American beats generation. He attended the Colombia University where he teamed up with William Burrows and Jack Kerouac to become exemplary writers in the beats generation. The writer got a share of trouble because of his curious nature, something that helped him in his writing career. He was sent to jail after being found to be in possession of drugs. The poet was, however, sent to a mental institution for some months. After his release, the writer heard of the beats foundation that was just developing at the time. Through the mentorship of other beat generation poets like the widely acclaimed Lawrence Ferlinghetti, he became an avid member. The first poem that brought Allen into the public spectacle was “Howl”, a poem full of sexual energy. The poem received the public’s attention because of its raw sexual language that revolutionized the face of American poetry. Before then, poets used hidden meanings and poetic devices to depict sexual innuendo because of the cultural atmosphere at the time. The society had not yet evolved on the freedom of expression. As a result, “Howl” immediately became famous upon its release in 1956. Even though “howl” was highly sexual, it addressed many issues in society.

The poem showcased a society that was hunted with poverty and social issues of race that it had lost hope. In his poetry, the aspects of poverty are addressed through the fact that people engaged in all forms of the sex trade. Men and women offered sexual favors in the streets for them to get food. The aspects of race were highlighted in the poem when the poet chooses black people to be the sex workers. In the poem, he highlighted that the men went to black streets to relieve themselves (Raskin, Jonah, 30). He also seemed to suggest that poverty affected that part of the society most. Ideally, the black community formed the working class after the Second World War. It was a time when the process of industrialization had just begun, and labour was needed. Because of the history of slavery, the black community formed the backbone of the working class, while the white one was the ruling class. In most of his works, Allen showcases the discrimination of color and sexual preferences. Such issues existed in the society at the time but were not fully addressed. There was a repression on sexual expression. Anti sodomy regulations in the 1950s prevented acts such as homosexuality in all the States in America. Allen identified himself as a homosexual in his poems and greatly criticized the government of this kind of oppression. People were not allowed to express their sexual orientations and preferences in any way. Through his poetry, the writer sought liberation of such oppression.

Additionally, through poems such as “ Howl”, he criticized the capitalist and communists which shaped the economic aspects of most nations at the time. He looks at capitalism as something that was beneficial only to some members of the society. According to the poet, capitalism in the United

Sates was fuelled with selfishness and classes that classified the wealthy and the poor. There were a lot of economic issues after the Second World War in the United States. The USA was going through an A potentially harmful economic depression that was the aftermath of the war. Therefore, there was a substantial amount of poverty that resulted in the process of industrialization. In this process, the development of industries was the way to ease inflation. The process gave rise to capitalism, which saw the USA become the most economically stable country with time. Other states such as Russia were still grappling with the poverty brought to them by the adoption of communism. The aspects of private land ownership and free trade played a major role in the shaping of the capitalist economy that was just beginning to take shape. The privatization of land encouraged the rise of the wealthy class in the society that gave taxes and revenues to the government from their private industries (Feldstein, Martin, 328). Free trade was established but was done so in a controlled measure that sought to curb the rising inflation at the time. Property owners were allowed to engage in free trade but under the scope of the government.

The economic environment was tense with aspects of labour workers and the ruling class. The laborers demanded the incorporation of their rights in the constitution, which led to the emergence of trade and labour Unions. The unions' controlled the affairs of the working class in terms of wages and working conditions. In addition, they formed the terms of international and local trade. Despite the economic recession of in 1954 and 1958, by 1960, the economy of the USA has already picked up. Meanwhile, other nations were adapting to the communist movements that advocated sharing and

public ownership of property. Communism brought about poor living standards and poverty in countries such as Russia. As a result, the USA could not trade with communists because of the low economic standards. The international trade agreements were only fostered through fellow capitalists like Germany. Previously, Germany had adopted a socialist approach to the economic but had to incorporate the aspects of capitalism to cope with the economic pressure. The factors that consequently influenced the drafting of economic interactions through shared markets were disadvantageous to some countries, which led to economic hostility. Eventually, by the close of the 1950s; the American economy had grown by 37%, facilitated by the G. I bill that ensured that America was provided with an educated working class. Besides, the country made some substantial strategy in the oil industry that made the use their cheap oil to power the factories.

Moreover, Allen used poems such as “ America” to criticize the politics and economics of the 1950s. He complained of the deplorable state of workers’ rights, political institution and distribution of wealth. In the poem, the writer explains that chasing wealth has become a fundamental value in the American culture. Americans were subjected to chasing the American dream instead of concentrating on the values upon which the country was built. People are always after getting rich, which is depicted through the fancy apartments and building that the poet spoke negatively about. The comfort of life of the American people became wealth oriented instead of social oriented. In this case, the social aspects in society do not play a role in the culture. Everything in America was fuelled by its need to become politically and economically versatile in order to achieve dominance. The poet cited

that the pursuit of wealth caused the impoverishment in the spirit of the American people. Instead of acquiring wealth, they became poorer in spirit. The American political institutions are one of the reasons for the occurrence of such scenarios. Capitalism was the second reason for the conditions in which the poet cited that Americans had been subjected to.

Moreover, Ginsberg addressed issues of the freedom of speech. After the American constitution had been ratified, the freedom of speech was included in the rights and freedoms clause. However, he observed that people were not allowed to express themselves in sentiments that were too strong and depicted the truth about politics, sexuality and social activism. He highlighted these after he was arrested following a complaint on his poem, “Howl” being obscene. The police arrested him for indecency in his literary work but the judge acquitted him based on the freedom of expressions. Thereafter, he explored the effects of the political institutions and law enforcement in his poems.

Other members of the beat movement like Lawrence Ferlinghetti also talked about the cultural, economic and political issues in the 1950s. He also criticized the acceptance of art in the American society as a form of counsel for the ills that occurred in it. His economic views were highlighted in literatures such as “picture of the gone world”. His style of writing was not as raw as Allen’s because he employed rhetoric devices and style to pass his points. He identified the way the American economy had subjected people to buying things all the time. Overspending was also highlighted to being contributed by taxation, which was the government’s way of getting rich.

Works cited

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