

## Lost Souls:

### The Beat Movement in the Work of Allen Ginsberg

الأرواح الهائمة: حركة الانهماج في شعر ألان جنزبيرج

“失落的灵魂：艾伦·金斯伯格作品中的节拍运动”

By

Dr Nagy Rashwan (MA, Ph.D. DeMontfort University, UK)  
Associate Professor of English Literature,  
English Department, Faculty of Arts, Damanhour University

[nagyrashwan@art.dmu.edu.eg](mailto:nagyrashwan@art.dmu.edu.eg)

Received: 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 2023.

Accepted: 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2023.

#### Abstract:

This article discusses the work of Allen Ginsberg (1926-1997); one of the most central figures in the American postwar poetic movement generally known under the term “Beat Movement”; also known as “Beat Generation” (Aronowitz 22, Bruce 3). It will discuss his aesthetics in terms of this movement’s cultural ideals of anti-establishment, anti-hegemony and anti-elitism, as well as its formal aesthetic practices of unfamiliarity, fluidity of structure, particularity of vocabulary/phraseology, and purist emotional content. It will argue, that the aesthetics of Ginsberg, and of his *Beat Generation* fellow poets, have been perhaps the first in the history of 20<sup>th</sup> century poetics to actively and consciously close up the gap between art and life attempting to actually live their poetry or, better still, produce a sort of poetics that is, itself, their very living and breathing lives. By contrast to many of the poetic experimentations across the 20<sup>th</sup> century,

which, more or less, enacted the art-for-art's-sake emblem with varying degrees of success, the *Beat* poets, represented here by Ginsberg, enact a radically different poetics where art and life are all but practically inseparable. Ginsberg's work, and the *Beat Generation's* at large, offer a poetics wholly entrenched in the individualist existential dilemmas and strive for being; an attempt for a complete integration of subject and language in poetic form.

**Key words:** Allen Ginsberg, Beat Generation, Beat Movement, Postwar Poetics, Postmodern Poetry

#### الملخص:

يناقش هذا المقال أعمال الشاعر الأمريكي ألان جنزبرج (1926-1997) أحد أبرز رموز الحركة الأمريكية الشعرية فيما بعد الحرب العالمية الثانية المعروفة باسم "حركة الانهزام" أو "جيل الانهزام" (Aronowitz 22, Bruce 3) حيث يحاول هذا المقال تعريف أدبيات أعمال هذا الشاعر من خلال فحص المبادئ الثقافية لتلك الحركة التي تدعو لمناهضة أشكال السلطة المؤسساتية والصفوية في الثقافة الغربية الحديثة، وتحاول تقديم محتوى شاعري خالص شعوريًا ونفسيًا مستخدمة، لأمالوفية بنائية مصاحبة باستخدام فردي خاص للعبارات والجمل. ومن ثم يقدم هذا المقال أطروحة مؤداها أن أدبيات هذا الشاعر وحركته الشعرية برمتها ربما هي الأولى في القرن العشرين التي سعت حثيئًا لإغلاق الفجوة المدعاة بين الفن والحياة، مقدمة أجزاء من الحياة بوصفها قصائد، أو بالأحرى مقدمة لنوع من الأدبيات هو ذاته الخبرات الحياتية لشعرائها كما يعيشون ويتنفسون في الواقع. بالمقارنة مع كثير من الحركات الشعرية التي ظهرت في القرن العشرين وجسدت بمبادئها مقولة "الفن للفن" بدرجات مختلفة من النجاح، يقدم شعراء الانهزام -ممثلين هنا في أعمال ألان جنزبرج- مبادئ وممارسات شعرية مختلفة جذريًا، حيث الفن والحياة لا يمكن فصلهما أو تجزئتهما أحدهما عن الآخر. تقدم

أعمال ألان جنزبرج، وكذلك حركته الشعرية كلها نوع من الأدبيات محصن تمامًا داخل التجربة الحياتية الوجودية للفرد وسعيه للوجود الواقعي؛ فهي محاولة للتوحيد بالكامل بين الذات واللغة في الشكل الشعري.

الكلمات الدالة: ألان جنزبرج - جيل الانهزام - حركة الانهزام - أدبيات ما بعد الحرب العالمية - الشعر ما-بعد-الحدائي.

#### 1- What is a *Beat* poem?

Starting the century with Mallarmé's and Apollinaire's visual experiments (Willard 3, Roger 13, Hyde 10), passing through the 1920s , 1930s and 1940s with Ezra Pound's (Tryphonopoulos 2, Robert 1, Perloff 18) and Louis Zukofsky's (Scroggins 2, Jennison 1) influential schools of *Imagism* (Beach 2) and *Objectivism* (DuPlessis 1) which spawned a whole sequence of avant-garde movements in the 1950s and the 1960s such as the Surreal (Reisman 1), Visual (Bohn 14), Architectural or Concrete (Solt 10), and Sound (McCaffery 15) poetries, ending with such movements as *The Black Mountain* (Matt 12), *The New York School of Poets* (Geoff 2), and *The Language Poets* (Arnold 1) of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, the aim has almost always been the objectification of poetry or the complete detachment between poetics and the living experience of the individual. Contrary to this, the work of Ginsberg and his fellow poets actively and consciously endeavor for a total subjectification of poetry. In this sense, it is perhaps best in the beginning to offer an example for analysis of one of the *Beat Movement's* most acknowledged poems; Ginsberg's *Howl* (1956) just to ascertain the most general characteristics of what constitutes a *Beat* Poem. Here are the first two pages of this poem:

## HOWL

for  
Carl Solomon

### I

I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness,  
starving hysterical naked,  
dragging themselves through the negro streets at dawn looking for  
an angry fix,  
angelheaded hipsters burning for the ancient heavenly connection  
to the starry dynamo in the machinery of night,  
who poverty and tatters and hollow-eyed and high sat up smoking  
in the supernatural darkness of cold-water flats floating  
across the tops of cities contemplating jazz,  
who bared their brains to Heaven under the El and saw  
Mohammedan angels staggering on tenement roofs  
illuminated,  
who passed through universities with radiant cool eyes hallucinating  
Arkansas and Blake-light tragedy among the scholars of war,  
who were expelled from the academies for crazy & publishing  
obscene odes on the windows of the skull,  
who covered in unshaven rooms in underwear, burning their money  
in wastebaskets and listening to the Terror through the wall,  
who got busted in their pubic beards returning through Laredo  
with a belt of marijuana for New York,  
who ate fire in paint hotels or drank turpentine in Paradise Alley,  
death, or purgatoried their torsos night after night  
with dreams, with drugs, with waking nightmares, alcohol and  
cock and endless balls,  
incomparable blind streets of shuddering cloud and lightning in the  
mind leaping toward poles of Canada & Paterson,

10

illuminating all the motionless world of Time between,  
Peyote solidities of halls, backyard green tree cemetery dawns,  
wine drunkenness over the rooftops, storefront boroughs of  
teahead joyride neon blinking traffic light, sun and moon  
and tree vibrations in the roaring winter dusks of Brooklyn,  
ashcan rantings and kind king light of mind,  
who chained themselves to subways for the endless ride from Battery  
to holy Bronx on benzedrine until the noise of wheels and  
children brought them down shuddering mouth-wracked  
and battered bleak of brain all drained of brilliance in the  
drear light of Zoo,  
who sank all night in submarine light of Bickford's floated out and  
sat through the stale beer afternoon in desolate Fugazzi's,  
listening to the crack of doom on the hydrogen jukebox,  
who talked continuously seventy hours from park to pad to bar to  
Bellevue to museum to the Brooklyn Bridge,  
a lost battalion of platonic conversationalists jumping down the  
stoops off fire escapes off windowsills off Empire State out  
of the moon,  
yacketayakking screaming vomiting whispering facts and memories  
and anecdotes and eyeball kicks and shocks of hospitals and  
jails and wars,  
whole intellects disgorged in total recall for seven days and nights  
with brilliant eyes, meat for the Synagogue cast on the  
pavement,  
who vanished into nowhere Zen New Jersey leaving a trail of  
ambiguous picture postcards of Atlantic City Hall,  
suffering Eastern sweats and Tangerian bone-grindings and  
migraines of China under junk-withdrawal in Newark's  
bleak furnished room,  
who wandered around and around at midnight in the railroad yard  
wondering where to go, and went, leaving no broken hearts,

(Ginsberg 9,10)

In no uncertain terms, this seems to be the antithesis of modernistic poetries no less. In terms of almost every conceivable aspect of form: starting with length, referentiality, sentence flow, word economy or densification, accuracy of image, rhythm, tone, syntactic and grammatical soundness, phraseology and vocabulary, ending with the very structure of ideas and presentation of identity or self, this is the other end of the spectrum. In terms of size, the poem is 10 of the above-pictured pages, compared to Pound's 117 Cantos falling in about 600 of similar-sized pages, or

Zukofsky's "A" falling in about 800 pages, or Joyce's 18 chapter *Ulysses*. General size, here, is a definite indication of grandeur. The biblical volumes of these modernist master pieces are just that literally: biblical. They were intended, more or less, as bibles of human intellectuality; the utmost endeavors thought possible of an aesthetic reflection on the human condition; the epitome of cultural discourse in the highest most elevated language of all, poetry.

"Howl" does not seem to have such intentions; far from it. It is a mere cry of a lost soul describing the depth of loss in an alienating world governed by power and greed. Its smaller ten-page length is simply the length of that personal cry; that is all. It does not attempt within its different lines and ideas to assume hidden knowledge of the past, present, and future, like those master pieces. Its messages are not implied, obscured or ambiguated by hundreds upon hundreds of amputated syntaxes, multi-layered symbolisms and references to antiquity, philosophy, different cultures, languages or histories.

Instead, it refers to itself as it is with no visible pretensions, implications or insinuations to further fields of knowledge or meanings. It says what it says as simply as it possibly can. It refers to itself and not to any other medium of meaning. So, when it reads: "I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving hysterical naked" the indicated meaning is just that. It tells the readers that the speaker has actually seen all these aspects of loss, and alienation and is crying in agony for them, as loudly as he could.

There are no references to Greek, Chinese, or ancient Egyptian mythologies, literatures or languages as is the case with *Ulysses*, or *The Cantos*, or *The Wasteland*; no reference to German elitist music like *Bach's* as is the case with Zukofsky's "A", or to Dante's *Divine Comedy* and Boccaccio's *The Decameron* as in Eliot's work, nor to any particular complex imagery or

symbolism. In short, the poem does not pretend a universal endless knowledge of the reality it wants to depict, but only of its own perspective.

The lines in the poem are not condensed to the bare minimal needed amount of words as in the cases of most modernist poetries requiring readers to sink in the depths of linguistic possibilities and entanglements. On the contrary, lines in *Howl* are long and arrhythmic with almost zero stylistic short-handedness or ambiguity and quite straightforward connotations and un-ambiguated grammatical structures. Sentences like: “who passed through universities with radiant cool eyes hallucinating Arkansas and Blake-light tragedy among the scholars of war” describe sincerely the anti-war sentiment of the speaker, and the way in which he views scholarly conformist politics which is backed by the media “terror through the wall”.

There are no concerns here for word-economy and multi-layered suggestiveness; no abandonment of syntax as is the case of modernistic avantgarde movements like Visual poetry where poems are composed of the absolute bare minimum of words; sometimes a single word, and in the case of Sound Poetry; no words at all, only sounds. Here, readers would have as many words in a line as it practically takes to point to meaning; directly and unequivocally.

Readers will find no particularly “artful” organization of words, no particular sonic order, or regularity where lines sound echoey, rhymed or musically nice to the ear as in the poetry of early pre-imagist poets such as *Auden* or *Yeats*. Lines are not there to make readers happy about their formal presence through rhyme, alliteration or any other musical equity, but only to estate their pointedness to the perceived reality they try to convey, if ever they could, in principle, manage to do so.

Even the images presented are completely different from those of modern and premodern eras. Here, readers find images directly pertinent to the syntactic necessities of the meanings

attempted with no excesses or pretenses. Images like “windows of the skull”, “Terror through the wall”, “Purgatoried”, “blind streets”, “roaring winter dusks”, “crack of doom”, “leaving no broken hearts”, and many others are all so specifically bound to their particular descriptions and syntax that dealing with each on its own would sound completely ridiculous. For example, “windows of the skull” in “who were expelled from the academies for crazy & publishing obscene odes on the windows of the skull”, is firmly bound with the “crazy” academics, who “publish obscene odes” and who are “expelled from the academies”. This is the extent of their “madness” in the speaker’s perspective, and the ways in which they play with death, rather than attempt to revere and reject it.

As for vocabulary, as far as this article is concerned, other than *Beats*’ poetry, it is very seldom that readers would find profane words like “cock, and endless balls”. However, vulgarity in itself is obviously not the aim, here, but the highest possible degree of aesthetic pointedness and sincerity even when shocking, or rather, because of it. The idea of appeasing a slumbering public for a counter-culturalist like Ginsberg, would, this article argues, be utterly offensive:

Those of the general populace whose individual perception is sufficiently weak to be formed by stereotypes of mass communication disapprove and deny the insight. The police and newspapers have moved in, mad movie manufacturers from Hollywood are at this moment preparing bestial stereotypes of the scene.  
(Ginsberg 155)

This would be the same public that approved the war in Vietnam with all the atrocities committed by the United States there, and called it, at the time, patriotic. This is the same public who stood by the establishment against personal freedoms which Ginsberg had always been viewing as fundamental for life. It is also the same public which stood idly by while Ginsberg

saw “the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness”. This whole poem is a loud cry against this very public and through its deaf ears:

those who will not work for money, or fib and make arms for hire, or join armies in murder and threat, those who wish to loaf, think, rest in visions, act beautifully on their own, speak truthfully in public, inspired by Democracy—what is their psychic fate now in America? An America, the greater portion of whose economy is yoked to mental and mechanical preparations for war? (Ginsberg 155)

However, the biggest and most profound difference from modernist masters is not in terms of form, though formal differences, as is clear by now, are quite massive. The deepest and most radical difference between the *Beats*’, and previous generations of experimental poetics, appears in terms their respective concepts of the function of poetry in society, and the general personal identity implied by the work.

For modernists like Pound, Eliot, Joyce and Zukofsky, poetry is a record of the human condition resembling the Ten Commandments Tablet given to Moses on the mount of Sinai; the proper medium with which to record the best endeavors of the human intellect. The epic proportions of their best work testify to their grandeur conceptualization of poetry as the medium most suitable for recording the status of man in existence. It is prophetic, semi-divine, pretentiously exalted to the highest possible rank of sentient achievement just because of its own unsubstantiated claim to deeper knowledge. It should, somehow, be viewed as infinite in depth, and coverage, since it functions as an alternative implied “bible” or something to that effect.

By contrast, the function of poetry for Ginsberg and his fellow *Beat* poets, as is quite clear from the poems themselves, is the consolidation of life itself, as brute and undecorated as possible. Poetry is the experience of language in life, brought together by that very tangible experience,

and lived in readership as a living performance no less. As such, the sincerer and more down-to-earth the writer's language and expressions are, the easier perceived by the public in readership. Poetry, in this case, functions as instances of experience, unique and profound, but a living experience nonetheless. As Ginsberg suggests: "Poetry is the record of individual insights into the secret soul of the individual and because all individuals are one in the eyes of their creator, into the soul of the world" (154).

The ego behind the "I" in the poem is, thus, a minimal one. The speaker in the poem, and the general identity to which this speaker refers, are thus not self absorbed, or under the illusion of grandeur assuming that he is recording in multi-layered symbolism the history of human intellectuality or consciousness. Instead, the ego in this poem simply offers parts of its life experience as untarnished, or true, as possible. *Beats'* poetry does not collect references from past languages, mythologies, religions, musical pieces, or literatures, but only its own pointedness to what is lived, felt and seen. The only history offered in this context, is that about how *Beat* poets had eventually risen to public acknowledgement with such shattered and unorthodox lives. It is a history written by their commentators and critics, not by them, and not in the poems themselves.

## 2- History:

The first ever use of the term "Beat" as a denomination of the behaviour and attitude of a group of poets came on the hands of writer Seymore Krim in the late 1950s. Krim had changed his usual leisure-time place to the "Cedar Tavern" on the edge of Greenwich Village, where he met folks he referred to as "Beat types", such as Jack Kerouac, John Clellon Holmes, Allen Ginsberg, and Gregory Corso (Bruce 51). He also met another group of poets associated with the Black-Mountain Collage, whom he also called "The Black Mountain Crowd" such as Hubert Selby,

Gilbert Sorrentino, and Robert Creeley (Theado 1). This is where both terms the “*Beat Poets*” which later became the “*Beat Generation*” and the “*Beat Movement*” (Elias 8, Hemmer 62), and the *Black Mountain School* of poetry have come to being in critical circles.

However, the first official use of the Term *Beat Generation* came on the hands of fellow poet and essayist John Clellon Holmes in 1952 with his article “This Is the Beat Generation” in the *New York Time Magazine*. Holmes has heard the term in a conversation with pioneer *Beat* poet Jack Kerouac in 1948 (Stephenson 2). Although Holmes did not mention the names of any of his fellow *Beat* poets who have come to symbolize the pioneering impetus behind the whole movement such as Allen Ginsberg, William S, Burroughs, or Jack Kerouac, he focused on the general zeitgeist of individualist bohemianism that defined their lives and social experiences (Holmes 16). Ginsberg himself defines the term *Beat* as follows:

So, the original street usage meant exhausted, at the bottom of the world, looking up or out, sleepless, wide-eyed, perceptive, rejected by society, on your own, streetwise. Or, as it was once implied, finished, undone, completed, in the dark night of the soul or in the cloud of unknowing. “Open,” as in Whitmanic sense of “openness,” equivalent to humility, and so it was interpreted in various circles to mean emptied out, exhausted, and at the same time wide-open—perceptive and receptive to a vision. (Ginsberg 193)

From the very beginning then, the label designating this kind of poetics was meant fundamentally as a description of the poets themselves; their life-attitudes, cultural stances and intellectual and social behaviors. “They were Bohemians”, as Wilentz suggests, who “disdained material wealth, and pursued spirituality in either primitive Christianity or Zen Buddhism” (8). The two earliest and most significant books designating this particular label for the group thereby

distinguishing their poetics with, more or less, sufficient accuracy have been Elias Wilentz anthology *The Beat Scene* (1960) and Bruce Cook's study. *The Beat Generation* (1971). Even though many members of the now-independently designated *Black Mountain* poetics had been conflated with the *Beats* in both books, they remain the first true critical recognition of this kind of poetics:

These new poets did not create self-defined groups nor did they publish manifestos, as the previous generation's Imagists or Objectivists might have done. Friendship and proximity often were factors in the formation of groups, but memberships in these circles shifted, evolved, and intermingled. Most of the new poets shared a common experience: the established literary journals of the 1950s rarely accepted their work. Because these poets lacked an endorsed public space for sharing poems and poetics, some readers applied the term "underground poetry" to their work. (Theado 3)

One of the most important reasons for their consideration as "underground poetry" is simply their subject matters where the language used, as demonstrated so far, was considered by many editors at the time as exceeding the acceptable limits in vulgarity, profanity, or cultural resistance. Another reason for this initial exclusion is also what Theado calls "their exploration of new modes of poetry" (3) where poetics become a site of social and cultural experiments into many psychological and intellectual issues and dilemmas regarding life in a postwar western society. Free-verse replaced the time-honored rhymed and rhythmized formulae, with colloquial, newly-invented phraseology and open-ends in terms of superficial structure. This is coupled with a daring exploration of previously-honored cultural taboos of life-style and sexuality in terms of

thematic contents. Even deep-structures of their poetry propagates resistance to main-stream aesthetic ideologies and canonization authorities.

For these, and other reasons, most major literary publications such as *The Hudson Review*, *The Partisan Review* and eventually *The Chicago Daily News*, rejected their work. In the rare occasion of publication, their work was severely attacked as “obscene”, an “evidence of the deterioration of the American society”, from “boys who scratch dirty words on railroad underpasses” (Mabley), with “a language like mashed potatoes” “strewing lines on a page any crooked way he chooses, and be hailed with the new American poetry” (Kennedy 243).

The alternative for these poets was simply independent literary magazines and publishing houses such as *Origin*, *The Black Mountain Review*, *The Fifties*, and *Ever Green Review* which were largely helped by the rise of new technologies in printing and distribution (Hemmer 62). As Theado notes:

The 1950s and 1960s saw a profusion of low cost publications that instead of national commercial distribution relied on mailing lists and shelf space in independent bookshops. Thanks to the availability of small hand presses as well as typewriters, mimeograph machines, and spirit duplicators, the production of independent low-run magazines and newsletters was not particularly difficult. (5)

This has eventually culminated in the publication of many of the *Beat* poets’ major works such as Ginsberg’s *Howl and Other Poems* in 1956 by City Lights Publications, Jack Kerouac’s *On the Road* in 1957 by Viking Publications, and William Burroughs’s *Naked Lunch* in 1959 by Olympia publications: all in New York. It was also accompanied by fair publicity about “censorship trials” practiced by the major publishing establishments of the time, and “police raids on Beat cafes in San Francisco” (Skerl 1).

However, the first ever true recognition of the *Beat Generation* poetics, came in in the form of poetic anthologies and critiques starting with *The Beat Generation and the Angry Young Men*, edited by Gene Feldman and Max Garte in 1958, *The Holy Barbarians* by L Lipton in 1959, then Donald M. Allen's *The New American Poetry* in 1960 followed by *A Casebook on the Beat*, in 1961 by a Thomas Parkinson; a professor of English at the university of California, Berkeley. Since then, tens of other books have discussed the aesthetic and cultural practices and ideals of the *Beat* poets rising to the peak of their notoriety and recognition with such works as *The Encyclopedia of the Beats* in 2007 edited by Kurt Hemmer, and *The Cambridge Companion to the Beats* in 2017, edited by Steven Belletto. Currently, the *Beat* movement has been recognized in most college curricula as integral part of the last century's American cultural and poetic heritage. Yet, as Skerl suggests, "despite the plethora of publications about the Beats, scholarly reassessments are still in short supply" as most publications are "anthologies, single-author readers or collected works, interviews, photographs, memoirs, letters, journals, documentary films, recordings, CD-ROMs" which only meet "classroom needs" and the seemingly "endless demands of fans" (1).

### 3- Critical Reception

Over the past seven decades or so, the critical reception of the *Beats* work varied dramatically, perhaps, like no other movement in the history of experimental poetics. To begin with, the *Beats*, like most other movements, were received with detraction and general rejection. For example, Journalist and critic Paul O'Neil argued that the *Beat Poets* consisted largely of "talkers, loafers, passive little con men"; "a bohemian cadre of writers who cannot write, and painters who cannot paint" (119). Similarly, Ned Polsky, noted then that of the Beats who came out of Greenwich

Village “at best a sixth of them are habituated to reading, and far fewer are concerned with writing” (175).

However, this was no ordinary rejection. Unlike most other movements since the beginning of the twentieth century such as *Imagism*, *Surrealism*, *Objectivism*, *Visual Poetry* or *Random-composition Poetry*, the *Beats* were rejected on a more fundamental level as an alternative culture and lifestyle; as “a bohemian cadre” rather than simply as poets. Unlike those, and many other experimental movements, the rejection of the *Beat Generation* was not directed only to their poetic forms, sorts of content, or aesthetic views, but to their very individualist existence as anti-authoritarian individuals.

They were not accused of being elitist, obscure, hard to fathom, too deep or simply too multi-layered and symbolically complex for the average reader to connect to, like most criticisms mounted against Pound, Eliot (Beach 83), Zukofsky and Oppen (DuPlessis 10) of the *Imagist* and *Objectivist* schools of poetry. Nor were they accused of extremist word-economy and departure from defining familiarity of poetic form as is the case with most *Visual* and *Surrealist* poetry (Reisman 3), being, still, more forcefully elitist and opaque. Certainly, such criticism does not accuse the *Beats* of offering playfulness by utilizing chance-generated compositions as is the case with the *Random Composition Poetry* of John Cage for instance (Perloff 82) lacking the due seriousness of the usual poetic venturing into the human soul.

Instead, the *Beats* were accused of their life-choices outside of, and against, the mainstream American social and cultural apparatus in the 1950s and 1960s. It is precisely because of their work’s ability to negotiate the traditionally accepted gap between life experience and the literary form, that their rejection by main-stream media and publishing houses took precedence. The *Beats* have resisted such control and censorship in their own popular, non-conformist ways:

The Beat counterculture had its geography of bohemian neighborhoods in urban centers (not only in New York and San Francisco, but across the country and beyond the United States); its public social gathering and performance spaces (cafes, clubs, theaters, galleries, bookstores, city streets, and parks); its little magazines, alternative newspapers, and publishers; its alternative religious thought; its unconventional sexual mores and families; and an ideology of dissent that redefined the political and resisted censorship, police crackdowns, and media attacks with a collective response. (Skerl 2)

This kind of popularity has more or less forced the establishment to recognize the newly emerging poetics in the early 1960s and 1970s following the publication of their diverse, but culturally resistant, works. Four major critical approaches can perhaps be distinguished as representing the bulk of this recognition of the *Beat's* poetics inside, but also, outside the USA.

The first and most dominant approach define the *Beats* in terms of their historical distinction. Critics such as Donald Allen, Matt Theado, Jennie Skerl, Robert Holton, Daniel Belgrad, Clinton R. Starr, John Strausbaugh, Christopher Gair, and Gregory Stephenson define the poetics of the *Beats* primarily in terms of its historical significance as a counterculture situated within certain prevailing post-war social and cultural ideals to which they took profound exception:

These homogenizing tendencies were evident in many spheres of public life. In 1950, the McCarran Internal Security Act and the Subversive Activities Control Act were passed, legislation severely curtailing dissent in America, as Senator McCarthy prepared for more inquisitorial House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) hearings aimed at persecuting those who did not agree with a narrow definition of political reality... it is clear that the contrast between the

centripetal social pressure toward control, conformity, and homogenization in the mainstream and the centrifugal, apparently willful eccentricity of the Beats could hardly be more complete. (Holton 12,13)

Their significance as a poetic movement mostly invested in creative poetic formats is thus boiled down to their cultural resistance as non-conformists who rejected post-war capitalist “homogenization” and “control” by the “eccentricity” of their lifestyles and their disregard to prevalent, largely conservative, societal moral codes.

Similarly, Belgrad suggests that the *Beats*’ work created “a literature that shaped the dissent of the coming decade” whose “postwar avant-garde” poetics bridged the gap between “modernism” and “the youth counterculture of the 1960s” (27). By the same token, Clinton Starr defines the *Beats*’ poetics simply as a “counterculture,” defined here as a rebellion against pervasive norms and practices that is expressed through individual resistance and collective action” (42). Christopher Gair also sees them as successors of “the late 19<sup>th</sup> century’s transcendentalists” for their “spontaneous new thinking”, “Individualism” and “counter-cultural practices” which worked as an “antidote” to the increasing “standardization of mid-twentieth century America” (7).

Perhaps the most significant of these historical approaches is Gregory Stephenson’s in his introduction of *The Daybreak Boys: Essays on the Literature of the Beat Generation* which he edited in 1990. His intricate historical view of the *Beats* sees their development as generally divided in two main stages: “the underground period, from 1944 to 1956; and the public period, from 1956 to 1962”, he continues:

Already in the early fifties, certain works of Beat literature, such as Kerouacs *The Town and the City* (1950), Holmes' *Go* (1952), and William S.

*Burroughs' Junkie* (1953) began to appear (as well as works that dealt in part with hipsters or Beats, such as Chandler Brossard's *Who Walk in Darkness* (1951) and George Mandel's *Flee the Angry Strangers* 1(952). But it was not until after the Six Gallery reading in October 1955 and the publication of Allen Ginsberg's *Howl and Other Poems* in 1956 that the Beats began to attract public and media attention. (3)

The two stages embody the transformation of the group from a relatively unknown aesthetic and cultural phenomenon to a largely established, now academically canonized, world poetic field of cultural and ontological debate and appreciation. The first stage which ended with publication of Ginsberg's *Howel and Other Poems* (1956), coupled with institutional recognition and notoriety, was when its *Beat* members truly lived the full extent of the meaning of the word: "weary, defeated, resigned, despondent, burdened with guilt and crime and sin or caught in the blind search for understanding" (Stephenson 3). The second stage, however, the *Beats* "lifted their voices and sang their visions" when "the major works of the *Beat Generation* was printed and began to exert their transforming power on American and international art" (4). Although basically historical, this approach is closer to this article's argument of the *Beats'* aesthetic as itself the live experiences of its members as well as their cultural ideals.

The second approach in the reception of the *Beats'* poetics is also historical. However, rather than focusing on the historical particularity of their political and cultural subversive-ness, and how they emerged as a group and a movement, it chooses a different historical path. This approach selects a single event, such as a conference or a gathering or a letter sent by one of the pioneers, and depicts its surrounding historical impact and the circumstances of its influence on the work of these poets. Critics such as Paul Cappucci and Steven Belletto center their

approaches around the critical significance of singular events which they see of particular significance in shaping *Beats*' aesthetics. For example, commenting on a letter sent by Ginsberg to William Carlos Williams asking to read Ginsberg poem "Sunflower Sutra", Cappucci writes:

No matter the reason, Ginsberg's letter acknowledges Williams's role in this "revival." Later Williams wrote to Theodore Roethke that "quite a reawakening of all the arts" was occurring on the coast and referenced Ginsberg's "gang, Karuak [his misspelling of Kerouac] and Corso."<sup>3</sup> He told Roethke "we live in an age when anything goes and I for one welcome it" (47).

For Cappucci, Ginsberg's letter "offers a significant testimonial to Williams about his enduring influence out west" (48). It is probably apt to wonder if an actual comparison between the poetics of both poets in terms of their actual poetries would not have provided a far more grounded "testimonial" than any such letter containing circumstantial views or personal confessions. Similarly, Steven Balletto describes a gathering of "Bohemians" explored by the Journalist Alfred Aronowitz in 1959 who was writing a series of articles about the *Beat Generation* for the New York Post:

Ginsberg insisted that many of the writers he admired weren't exactly Beat, and singled out, for example, Edward Marshall as "one of the important young poets," but specified that Marshall "originally was one of the Black Mountain College group, with which we have more or less combined." ... Aronowitz's anecdote of the poetry contest captures a tension between naming literary schools but then insisting on the inadequacy of those names, between claiming that labels don't matter because, as Ginsberg says, "we"—presumably the Beats—have

“combined” with Black Mountain writers, while sidestepping the fact that the very notion of combination or “we” is premised on some sort of identifiable difference. (64)

For Balletto, the event, Aronowitz ‘s article, and Ginsberg’s words, as well as independent poetry publications such as *Yugen* in the late 1950s, are all symptomatic of the identification of a “united front” against “academic poetry”; a “vernacular revolution” against capitalist “academic norms”, “middle-class values” and “officiality” (64-5). They are also symptomatic of overzealous labialization processes that do not always hold grounds under a “diffuse sensibility” (78). However, it is also important to ask if that same conclusion could not been have reached, perhaps much more forcefully, at thorough comparative examinations of the politics of poetic form employed by groupings or individual poets, rather than using circumstantial evidence of historical happenstance?

The third approach to the poetics of the *Beats* generally attempts to relate their poetics to either some of their contemporary compatriots, or to specimens of poetic endeavors outside the USA. Critics such as George Hart, Eric Keenagham, Kurt Hemmer, and John Wrington largely focus on certain chosen relevance of the *Beats* to other contemporary or traditional poetics inside or outside the USA. The general idea is to establish the *Beats*’ cultural distinctiveness by means of identifying one or more of their poetics’ most visible traits as an aesthetic signature. For example, George Hart suggests:

Beat and Black Mountain theories of poetry are centrally concerned with time and the time crisis of modernity, and in Beat and Black Mountain poetry and prose the body is central to writing. ... Beat-Black Mountain poetics is the attempt to return form to “lived time” in “social space,” to achieve a sense of

“timescape” that has been degraded and displaced by the time crisis of modernity.

(85)

This grouping of two relatively distinguishable poetics under an individualist interpretation of a time-image that, may or may not, have been actually expressed in poetic form, seems simply too convenient and much less informative about the poetics of either school than it seems to assume. All poetry with its superstructures’ psychological language, enjoy, more or less, complex relationships with time since the Greek Odyssey, and the ancient Egyptian book of “coming into the day”. The problem is generally how such relationships help shape this poetry’s formal philosophy and aesthetic impact on the one hand, and cultural value and influence on the other. Again, critic Eric Keenaghan concentrates on how poet John Wieners both attended “the Black Mountain College between 1955, and 1957”, and was “taught by Charles Olson, Robert Creeley and Robert Duncan”, but later met Allen Ginsberg and Peter Orlovsky” and began circulating among them” (95). This is how Wieners’ work, for Keenaghan, stands in the “intersection” between the *Beat*, and the *Black Mountain* poetics. He suggests:

Wieners’ project exemplifies the two groups shared “impulse” and its especial ability to transform the embodied conditions of personhood and eroticism. He developed a Keatsian poetics, blending Romantic Negative Capability with a form of modernist impersonality (98).

Similarly, Kurt Hemmer identifies Edward Dorn as belonging to the two schools of writing together, the *Black Mountain* and the *Beats*, who was “mentored” by Charles Olson (110). Csilla Toldy identifies Ginsberg’s *Howl* with the Hungarian revolution, as he, in her words, “was howling for personal freedom” (Toldy). In the same vein, Jimmy Fazzino, suggests that Ginsberg’s stay in India to study Buddhism, and his meeting with a group of Bengali poets

whom he calls "Hungry Generation" poets, and who similarly "felt disaffected by the fervent nationalism they saw all around them", had had a tremendous impact on his world view:

Beat Generation writers were profoundly engaged with the world at large, particularly colonial and postcolonial spaces in what was then called the third world. Living and writing abroad at the great moment of decolonization across the globe, the Beats were more than just tourists (as more than a few critics have asserted), that is to say, unconcerned or altogether unaware of the immediate and usually fraught political situations unfolding around them. (2)

Whether or not the "world-ness" of Ginsberg's, and, more generally, the *Beat Generation's* cultural impetus is premised solely on exposure to "other" cultures as critics such as Nancy M. Grace and Jennie Skerl suggest (11), or on the universality and fundamentality of their own cultural views and aesthetic practices from the start, seems of little baring on the general understanding of their poetic signatures.

The fourth, and final critical approach to the *Beats* poetics seems mostly to concentrate on their spiritual affinities and metaphysical tendencies. Chief among critics of this approach is David Stephen Calonne with his 2017 thorough study *The Spiritual Imagination of the Beats* summarizing the poetics of these counter-culturalists as various implied psychological spiritualities. Although he argues in his introduction that he has "no intention to force these different and individual writers onto the same thematic framework", he manages to suggest:

Allen Ginsberg (1926-1997) encountered William Blake in a mystical vision in 1948, later devoting himself to Tibetan Buddhism, while his friend Jack Kerouac (1922-1969) remained faithful to his Catholic roots, but also created a gigantic manuscript published posthumously as *Some of the Dharma* (1997) documenting his discovery of Buddhist history and texts. Gregory Corso (1930-2001) wrote

poetry about St. Francis of Assisi and studied Egyptian hieroglyphics... While the reading of ancient and modern texts was widespread, several of the Beats also devoted themselves to a variety of spiritual practices: meditation, breathing exercises, zazen, Yoga, Tantra, the chanting of mantras and shamanism. (2, 11)

As shall be apparent in the coming pages, although spirituality occupies a large portion of the *Beat* poets' general aesthetic drive, particularly in the case of Allen Ginsberg, their poetics involve much more general cultural and aesthetic stances towards life in the political and social conditions of America during these three decades: 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. Their spirituality was but one of a multi-sided approach to the post world war era which represented the rise of America as the sole world power at the height of the cold-war era. Certainly, their general political rejections of capitalism and its resultant obsessive consumerist policies, their deploring of bourgeois conformity and ambition, their challenge of artistic elitism, symbolism, and ambiguity for a more direct engagement with life-experiences, their adoration of individualist freedoms which translated into alternative lifestyles of drugs, homosexuality and communism, have all contributed to their poetic signatures respectively and intermittently:

The Beats shared a deeply felt disappointment with the shallowness and acquisitiveness of American culture. This disaffection catalyzed their search for more artistically and spiritually attuned ways of thinking, living, and creating; frequently inflected by Eastern religion, these found expression in lifestyles and artworks that celebrated rootlessness, rebellion, introspection, and spontaneity... the Beats were imitated by other restive youths and scorned by mainstream voices that found nothing to admire in a scruffy subculture steeped in sex, drugs, and metaphysics. But such attacks only added to the Beats' prominence, allowing

them to flummox stereotypes ...and making them a hotly contested symbol in the era's culture wars. (Sterrit16)

In summary, the critical reception of the Beats over the past few decades in the four approaches mentioned above have more or less essentialized their lives in their different aspects and manifestations. Mostly, these approaches have succeeded in historically positioning the *Beats'* cultural and political stances either individually or collectively within the wider global map of Western politics and culture. They have also attempted to account for their spirituality and metaphysical tendencies, but only as part of their larger counter-cultural attitudes towards the main-stream establishment in America during these decades. The actual manifestations of these many "counter," and "anti" tendencies within the poetry itself, seem to have always been relegated to a secondary position if at all addressed and accounted for. The employed politics of poetic form, the ways in which they were conceived of, and deployed, as well as their aesthetic impact on readership, all seem to have been thought of as somehow already understood, or given. The *Beat Movement*, both as an aesthetic avantgarde poetic experiment and as unique poetic registers remain almost entirely unexplored.

#### 4- The aesthetics of experience: art and life

It is perhaps best in this juncture to offer for analysis another example from Ginsberg poem *Kaddish* (1956) in order to further ascertain the formal attributes of Ginsberg's, and more generally, the *Beats'* poetics. Here are the first two pages of the elegy Ginsberg wrote for his late mother in 1956:

*Berkeley, January 17, 1956*

Kaddish

*For Naomi Ginsberg, 1894-1956*

I

Strange now to think of you, gone without corsets & eyes, while I walk on the sunny pavement of Greenwich Village.

downtown Manhattan, clear winter noon, and I've been up all night, talking, talking, reading the Kaddish aloud, listening to Ray Charles blues shout blind on the phonograph

the rhythm the rhythm—and your memory in my head three years after—And read Adonais' last triumphant stanzas aloud—wept, realizing how we suffer—

And how Death is that remedy all singers dream of, sing, remember, prophesy as in the Hebrew Anthem, or the Buddhist Book of Answers—and my own imagination of a withered leaf—at dawn—

Dreaming back thru life, Your time—and mine accelerating toward Apocalypse, the final moment—the flower burning in the Day—and what comes after,

looking back on the mind itself that saw an American city

a flash away, and the great dream of Me or China, or you and a phantom Russia, or a crumpled bed that never existed—

like a poem in the dark—escaped back to Oblivion—

No more to say, and nothing to weep for but the Beings in the Dream, trapped in its disappearance,

sighing, screaming with it, buying and selling pieces of phantom, worshipping each other,

worshipping the God included in it all—longing or inevitability?—while it lasts, a Vision—anything more?

It leaps about me, as I go out and walk the street, look back over my shoulder, Seventh Avenue, the battlements of window office buildings shouldering each other high, under a cloud, tall as the sky an instant—and the sky above—an old blue place.

or down the Avenue to the south, to—as I walk toward the Lower East Side—where you walked 50 years ago, little girl—from Russia, eating the first poisonous tomatoes of America—frightened on the dock—

then struggling in the crowds of Orchard Street toward what?—toward Newark—

toward candy store, first home-made sodas of the century, hand-chummed ice cream in backroom on musty brown floor boards—

Toward education marriage nervous breakdown, operation, teaching school, and learning to be mad, in a dream—what is this life?

Toward the Key in the window—and the great Key lays its head of light on top of Manhattan, and over the floor, and lays down on the sidewalk—in a single vast

beam, moving, as I walk down First toward the Yiddish Theater—and the place of  
poverty  
you knew, and I know, but without caring now—Strange to have moved thru  
Paterson, and the West, and Europe and here again,  
with the cries of Spaniards now in the doorstoops doors and dark boys on the  
street, fire escapes old as you  
—Tho you're not old now, that's left here with me—  
Myself, anyhow, maybe as old as the universe—and I guess that dies with  
us—enough to cancel all that comes—What came is gone forever every time—  
That's good! That leaves it open for no regret—no fear radiators, lacklove, torture  
even toothache in the end—  
Though while it comes it is a lion that eats the soul—and the lamb, the soul, in us,  
alas, offering itself in sacrifice to change's fierce hunger—hair and teeth—and the  
roar of bonepain, skull bare, break rib, rot-skin, braintricked Implacability.  
Aii! all we do worse! We are in a fix! And you're out, Death let you out, Death had  
the Mercy, you're done with your century, done with God, done with the path thru  
it—Done with yourself at last—Pure—Back to the Babe dark before your Father,  
before us all—before the world—  
There, rest. No more suffering for you. I know where you've gone, it's good.  
No more flowers in the summer fields of New York, no joy now, no more fear of  
Louis,  
and no more of his sweetness and glasses, his high school decades, debts, loves,  
frightened telephone calls, conception beds, relatives, hands—  
No more of sister Elanor,—she gone before you—we kept it secret—you killed  
her—or she killed herself to bear with you—an arthritic heart—But Death's killed  
you both—No matter—  
Nor your memory of your mother, 1915 tears in silent movies weeks and  
weeks—forgetting, aggrieve watching Marie Dressler address humanity, Chaplin  
dance in youth,  
or Boris Godunov, Chaliapin's at the Met, halling his voice of a weeping Czar—by  
standing room with Elanor & Max—watching also the Capitalists take seats in  
Orchestra, white furs, diamonds,  
with the YPSL's hitch-hiking thru Pennsylvania, in black baggy gym skirts pants,  
photograph of 4 girls holding each other round the waste, and laughing eye, too  
coy, virginal solitude of 1920  
all girls grown old, or dead, now, and that long hair in the grave—lucky to have  
husbands later—  
You made it—I came too—Eugene my brother before (still grieving now and will  
gream on to his last stiff hand, as he goes thru his cancer—or kill —later  
perhaps—soon he will think—)

The very first thing a reader might notice in the poetic writing of Ginsberg and the whole of his *Beat* group of poets is the commonness, or colloquial nature, of their sentence structure. Lines like “while I walk on the sunny pavement of Greenwich Village. / downtown Manhattan, clear

winter noon, and I've been up all night, talking, talking, reading the Kaddish aloud, listening to Ray Charles blues shout blind on the phonograph/ the rhythm the rhythm—and your memory in my head three years after”, all seem, on the surface, rather too simplistic in their phrasal structure or artistry to be considered anything but common talk.

At first sight, they appear as direct, down-to-earth, uncalculated expressions of a common man, with no particular sonic or semiotic specificity, no particular order or arrangement, and, in short, no artifice. They seem intentionally verbosely with unnecessary repetitions, and bad punctuation. Sequences of words run off wildly into two or three page-lines and sometimes more, with no accurate punctuation marks or sentence breaks. By contrast to modernist, and pre-modernist poetics, where each line, phrase, sentence and stanza are designed into specific sonic and/or semiotic format to reflect certain mastery of molding artistry, this seems to be almost intentionally anti-artistic.

This is the reason why the early reception of *Beat* poetics thought of it as written by “writers who cannot write” (O’Neil 119) and are not “concerned with writing” (Polsky 175). To a certain extent, O’Neil’s and Polsky’s comments are accurate, at least with regards to conventions of poetic form. The *Beat* poetics, as is obvious from Ginsberg’s poem above, is not concerned with poetic artifice; that is, with traditionally constructed poetic lines showing dense language and carefully carved imagery and rhythmic units. It is also not concerned with reference to history, mythology, or religion, in the way other 20<sup>th</sup> century poetic movements such as Imagism, or Objectivism, are.

Instead, it is concerned with the raw human experience. In other words, the *Beat* poetics attempts to offer an embodiment of the life experience as unadulterated and raw as fathomably possible,

with almost total disregard to referential or stylistic decorum as practiced by most other experimental or traditional poetic movements, past or present.

Underneath the surface of Ginsberg's poem, readers would encounter the depth and psychological turbulence of a lost soul searching for meaning to the fundamental questions of existence embodied in this case in the death of his mentally hospitalized mother. Here, readers find repetitions of words where superficially or traditionally no sense is offered, but where underneath the surface, a whole world of meanings is lurking for discovery. Clauses like: "the rhythm the rhythm—and your memory in my head three years after" emulates the actual memory happening inside the life experience of the speaker with all its nonsensical repetitions and associations of words and meanings, offering almost total disregard of readers' concepts of what constitutes a "good poem". In fact, this is precisely what this poetry dismisses as elitist, hegemonic, and culturally and aesthetically oppressive.

Those of the general populace whose individual perception is sufficiently weak to be formed by stereotypes of mass communication disapprove and deny the insight. Literature expressing these insights has been mocked, misinterpreted, and suppressed by a horde of middlemen whose fearful allegiance to the organization of mass stereotype communication prevents them from sympathy (not only with their own inner nature but) with any manifestation of unconditioned individuality. (Ginsberg 145-6)

This "unconditioned individuality" is precisely what has been embodied in the poetic form of the *Beat* aesthetics. "Unconditioned" in the sense that it is not restricted to any common or institutionalized concept of formal beauty, not following of canonized models of poetic experimentation, much less, of poetic validity; "stereotypes of mass communication" in

Ginsberg's words. "Unconditioned" here seems to mean freedom from any oppressive manipulation of the public's general consciousness by modern capitalist apparatuses such as mass-media, Hollywood or the News outlets.

In the poem above, this is presented formally as a general disregard to traditionally established grammatical and stylistic soundness, and as a highly conversational and colloquial linguistic attitude within each and every line. For example, lines like "No more to say, and nothing to weep for but the Beings in the Dream, trapped in its disappearance,/ sighing, screaming with it, buying and selling pieces of phantom, worshipping each other," express the inner sense of loss at the question of departure by death of a loved one. This is manifested in small phrasal utterances like; "nothing to say", "nothing to weep for" referring to the internal psychological turmoil of the speaker whose dreams, not reality, are what is worthy of weeping for: "but the beings in the dream". Only inner sensations and feelings deep within that "soul of the individual" as raw and sincere as they could possibly be, are worthy of remembrance and of expression in language. Those "dream beings" or soul's truer aspirations and wishes are "trapped" in their "disappearance" dealing with "pieces of phantom" while "sighing and screaming" for their own impossibility.

"No more to say, and nothing to weep for" is a conversational line with colloquial register that lacks traditional poetic density and conventional artistry. It is the way people normally speak to one another in coffee shops and other social locales. There is no pretense here of decorum and artifice. There is only an emphasis on the inner happenings of a speaking experience that is particular to the soul of the speaker who mourns his own mother's passing. Readers will find grammatical mistakes normally committed in colloquial language such as the use of s singular

possessive pronoun “its”, where it should be plural “their”, in “trapped in its disappearance”, and many other similar disregards to any imposed system of presentation in poetic language.

For example, lines such as “while I walk on the sunny pavement of Greenwich Village. downtown Manhattan, clear winter noon”, “Seventh Avenue”, “down the Avenue to the south, to—as I walk toward the Lower East Side where you walked 50 years ago”, all seem conversational in nature dictated by the necessity of spontaneous verbal exchange, rather than of poetic artifice that ordinarily emphasizes compact wording for maximum readership impact. For, in principle, what would the name of a specific street and its branching lanes mean for readers who most probably would have never visited, or likely to visit, them?

Arguably, art and life are here integrated into one medium, or discourse, where conventional differences in terms of style, structure of ideas, and tone are all challenged and resisted. The conversational register, with all its seemingly unnecessary additions, repetitions and grammatical and punctuational mistakes, is precisely the point made by this type of poetry when it presents unadulterated life experience as itself poetry.

##### 5- Anti-Aestheticism, the *Beats*’ art for life’s sake.

Of this wisdom, the poetic passion, the desire of beauty, the love of art for art’s sake, has most; for art comes to you professing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass, and simply for those moments’ sake. (Pater 239)

This is one of the earliest coinages of the term Art-for-art’s sake at the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is also one of the most prevalent definitions of the term indicating, at least partially, that appreciation of works of art should be premised solely on their own sovereign beauty and not on any didactic or economic value they might offer:

The base of all artistic genius is the power of conceiving humanity in a new, striking, rejoicing way, of putting a happy world of its own creation in place of the meaner world of common days, of generating around itself an atmosphere with a novel power of refraction, selecting, transforming, recombining the images it transmits, according to the choice of the imaginative intellect. (214).

For Pater, and earlier for the whole movement of British and French *Aestheticism* during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, seemingly, only the “artistic genius” and “the imaginative intellect” are the worthy models for the production of beauty in literature and the arts. Only them are worthy of appreciation and valuation. Only the elite among the innovators are capable, and by extension, among the audience as well. The divide between life and art is not only encouraged and celebrated but seen as fundamental in the production of beauty on which all arts are premised and perceived. Edgar Allan Poe comments:

We find it succeeded by a **heresy** too **palpably** false to be long tolerated, but one which, in the brief period it has already endured, may be said to have accomplished more in the corruption of our Poetical Literature than all its other enemies combined. I **allude** to the heresy of *The Didactic*. It has been assumed, **tacitly** and **avowedly**, directly and indirectly, that the ultimate object of all Poetry is Truth...We have taken it into our heads that to write a poem simply for the poem’s sake, ... the simple fact is that would we but permit ourselves to look into our own souls we should immediately there discover that under the sun there neither exists nor *can* exist any work more thoroughly dignified, more **supremely** noble, than this very poem, this poem *per se*, this poem which is a poem and nothing more, this poem written solely for the poem’s sake. (Poe 112)

Of course, *Aestheticism*, and its slogan; *art-for-art's-sake*, was meant to combat materialist definitions of literature and the arts as basically didactic revolving around the re-education of the public.

Fundamentally, it entailed the point of view that art is self-sufficient and need serve no other purpose than its own ends. In other words, art is an end in itself and need not be (or should not be) didactic, politically committed, propagandist, moral - or anything else but itself; and it should not be judged by any non-aesthetic criteria (e.g. whether or not it is useful). The major implication of the new aesthetic stand point was that art had no reference to life, and therefore had nothing to do with morality (Poe, for instance, had condemned the 'heresy of didacticism'), and in the later Victorian period we find Swinburne (who was much influenced by Baudelaire) proclaiming the art for art's sake theory... Art, not life.

Art instead of life, or as an alternative to life. (Cuddon 11, 12)

Here lies the whole point of the difference the *Beat* poetics poses from contemporary and previous experimental movements. Whereas most other experimental poetic movements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century including *Imagism*, *Objectivism*, *Visual poetry*, *Sound Poetry*, *Random Composition poetry*, and many others, tend to carry at least one or more tendencies associate-able with this general advocacy for the "purity" of the "art" as in "art-for-art's-sake", *Beats'* poetics tend to do the absolute opposite. Both in terms of its superficial and deeper structures, its styles and contents, its colloquial tones and ideological stances, *Beat* poets offer their own very lives as themselves the very aspects of art they wish to call poems, to be felt and read both simultaneously with no distinction identifiable in readership regarding their artificiality.

The above quoted poem by Ginsberg is an elegy to his mother. The content of the poem reveals a sincere psychological experience made into sequences of language staring at any word or phrase. Whenever readers start, for example, at the word “rhythm”, it is very difficult to stop at any given interval afterwards. Instead, readers must continue reading almost to the end of the poem literally. There is a continuous flow of memories, feelings, sensations, notes and personal references that seems endless and very particular: “a flash away, and the great dream of Me or China, or you and a phantom Russia, or a crumpled bed that never existed—” (Ginsberg 48).

It is also a reflection on the existential question of death: “you’re done with your century, done with God, done with the path thru it—Done with yourself at last—Pure—Back to the Babe dark before your Father, before us all—before the world” (48) and a colossal sense of loss, alienation and yearning for the ultimate being: “I know where you’ve gone, it’s good. No more flowers in the summer fields of New York, no joy now, no more fear of Louis” (48).

The content of the poem, though is generally an elegy to his late mother, is also an outof his self’s inner life as experienced within language through a poetics of individual uniqueness and sincerity. This is precisely the kind of aesthetics that counterbalances the art’s-for-art’s-sake’s claim for better or deeper beauty. The transcendental metaphysical claim for the sublime (Joughin and Malps 3) is here counterbalanced by the down to earth tangible claim for actuality and identity. Both are deep and beautiful, but, more significantly, both are culturally potent and effective.

#### 6- Bohemianism, *The Beatitude* and Counter-culturalism

Bohemianism is perhaps the most decisive characteristic of this general centralization of the individual; this over-the-board exaltation of life experiences within language as opposed to previously established canons of poetic form and content in both conventional and experimental

20<sup>th</sup> century poetics. It defines the *Beats*' life-styles and ideological stances on the one hand, and their poetic challenge to established politics of form on the other. However, Bohemianism has a long-established history of political and artistic dissidence in Western cultures, particularly France, since at least the early 19<sup>th</sup> century:

The first modern generation of bohemians was born from the political, social, and cultural upheavals of 19th-century France.<sup>1</sup> The 18th-century bourgeois revolution challenged the feudal estate system and aristocracy, creating the conditions for rapid urbanization, widespread population migration, modernization, and a new political economic structure. People flooded the cities, hungry, poor, and hopeful, seeking work or business, as well as freedom from the traditional strictures of feudalism and the monarchy. (Halasz 11)

Bohemianist and the Bourgeois classes have emerged simultaneously as a direct result of the industrial revolution and the resultant rapid urbanization of Western societies at the late 18<sup>th</sup>, early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The growing requirement of workforce coupled with the expansion of markets in the new colonies in Africa and the new world provided the main platform of economic need for migration of population from rural to urban areas founding a middle-class bourgeois society and culture. The feudalist aristocratic elitist class, where power and wealth were concentrated, was thus replaced by a newly-formed world order where the Bourgeoisie, with their implied dream of aristocracy and recreation of new forms of cultural elitism, dominate urban spaces. The new bourgeoisie conformed to the rules of the market, and promoted social and cultural values that serve their interests as an emerging political force. Their main drive was, as is always the case, consolidation of wealth and power, and the rise to the level of the very

tyranny they came to replace. Their artistic expression has always promoted their grey-area cultural stance of attempting to rise to power but never fully realizing it.

Alongside this class, there emerged another urban group of people who insisted on self-determination against newly emerging bourgeoisie institutions driven by market greed and effectively replicating older hegemonic systems of religious and monarchical aristocracy:

The term “Bohemian” had first been applied to poor artists and poets on the Left Bank in Paris in the 1830s... Bourgeois culture and bohemian counterculture were created at the same time, and by the same great force, the industrial revolution. It was then, at the end of the 1700s, that the economies of Europe turned away from peasant agrarianism toward urban industrialism. Cities swelled with the rise of the new middle class and working class. (Both terms come to us from this period, along with “industry,” “factory,” “capitalism,” and “socialism.”) Merchants became captains of industry; peasants flooded in from the countryside to become the new urban proletariat. (Strausbaugh 29)

The American and French Revolutions in 1776, 1789 consecutively, have both eventually resulted in the destruction of old religious and monarchical hold on conditions of material production and exchange; both social and cultural. This, in turn, resulted in the initiation of a social grounding for the marginalized few to still adhere to an idealistic conception of individualist freedoms and rights. Some of these rights and freedoms involved the following of individualist muses and the romantic belief in the idea of artistic individual possessing uncanny abilities to create unique leaps of cultural insight. It also involved the rejections of old institutionalized art “by either the church, or noble patrons” for “cathedrals” and “places” (29) symbolizing power and control.

Bohemianism, from the very start, then, has been built on the utter contempt of anti-individualist hierarchies; be them the monarchy, the church, the latter bourgeoisie self-serving institutions, or any other power structure. The true Bohemian is a rejectionist by nature, indifferent to worldly greed, exalted in his/her own self-realized moral and aesthetic superiority, and utterly contemptuous of authority:

One of the seminal creations of this period is the idea of the artist as tortured genius, in every way finer, braver, more sensitive, more angelic, and more satanic than those mere shopkeepers and merchants who had the privilege of consuming the products of his greatness. (30)

Here lies the true reason for the *Beats'* radical difference in poetic form and vocabulary from an esoteric, interictally carved, or structured, sentences, lines and forms (as in the case of Imagism), to spontaneous, very colloquial, and highly fluid oral spontaneity. The idea is to offer a poem that does not mimic the control mechanisms of the power-structures with which capitalism operates; a poem that combats by its vocabulary and form hegemonic demands of fake refinement and depth; a poem that undermines existing authoritative aesthetic choices as autocratic and oppressive; and a poem that reflects the actual lived experience of the individual in the language of his/her own suffering in daily life. Evidently, these are the politics of form, among others, which the *Beat's* poetics, especially Ginsberg's promotes:

From bohemianism, the Beat Generation absorbed a spirit of unconventionality and of romantic egoism, an antimaterialist ethic, a sense of the inherent repressiveness and regimentation of society, and of the sterility and corruption of civilization, together with a faith in the redeeming, transforming power of art. (Stephenson 6)

Even in his own critical writing, Ginsberg himself affirms these ideas and further reinforces his commitment to rejecting “the mechanical consciousness” of the capitalist machine and its resultant suppression of individuality’s liberating power:

Recent history is the record of a vast conspiracy to impose one level of mechanical consciousness on mankind and exterminate all manifestations of that unique part of human sentience, identical in all men, which the individual shares with his Creator. The suppression of contemplative individuality is nearly complete...Those of the general populace whose individual perception is sufficiently weak to be formed by stereotypes of mass communication disapprove and deny the insight.. (154)

However, the space in which these ideas appear most vividly is in Ginsberg’s poetry, where dissidence against established forms of bourgeoisie esotericism are challenged and mocked. Here, for example, are two of Ginsberg’s short poems.

#### Marijuana Notation

How sick I am!  
that thought  
always comes to me  
with horror.  
Is it this strange  
for everybody?  
But such fugitive feelings  
have always been  
my métier.  
Baudelaire—yet he had  
great joyful moments  
staring into space,  
looking into the  
middle distance,  
contemplating his image  
in Eternity.  
They were his moments  
of identity.

#### After Dead Souls

Where O America are you  
going in your glorious  
automobile, careening  
down the highway  
toward what crash  
in the deep canyon  
of the Western Rockies,  
or racing the sunset  
over Golden Gate  
toward what wild city  
jumping with jazz  
on the Pacific Ocean!

It is solitude that  
produces these thoughts.  
It is December  
almost, they are singing  
Christmas carols  
in front of the department  
stores down the block on  
Fourteenth Street.

New York, Nov. 1951

Spring 1951

(Ginsberg 62-3)

The very first thing readers might observe about the two poems above is their decidedly colloquial registers; the ease and seeming uncomplexity with which they can all be read, and comprehended. None of them offer “design” as an intentional, pre-determined factor in the final formal impacts on readership. Instead, readers find almost completely spontaneous “moments” of experience played, or expressed, in their everyday language with much less care for prosodic, symbolic, or semantic “order” than is usual in most poetry, past and present. There does not seem to be any demand on the reader to “know” anything as a preparation for “getting” the poem, nor be exceptionally smart to understand any “clues” or references “implied” or hidden within. Instead, there is only outpourings of momentary insights and unrefined thoughts and memories that do not seem to pretend to be anything but themselves.

“*Marijuana Notation*” starts with an exclamatory statement implying irony more than information. “How sick I am/that thought/ always comes to me/ with horror” is a satiric commentary on claimed intellectual sophistication. “Thought” is associated with “horror”, since it is, in a way, the root of all evil; wars, destructive technologies, class divide and many other atrocities. It is also associated with elitism, and people’s vanity. The speaker asks in wonder “is this strange for everybody?” or is this the case with him only? The question implies sensitivity as if to say that it might be only him who feels this way; only him who realizes the “horror” that

“thought” might sometimes bring about. He reassures readers that if such feelings are “strange”, they have always been a part of his identity.

The mentioning of Baudelaire (1821-1867) is quite apt in this context. The first ever to write prose poetry, Baudelaire is the 19<sup>th</sup> century French poet who exalted personal experience above all else, as the true source of poetic inspiration (Britannica 192). He is well known for his affirmation of personal identity, and his preference of daily life over ordered or structured reality. These are, more or less, the same general principles advocated by Ginsberg, and his fellow *Beat* poets, if it were not for Baudelaire’s insistence on rhyme and rhythm. However, the use of his name in the poem seems to point at his pioneering poetic difference as an example to be emulated: “Baudelaire—yet he had/ great joyful moments/ staring into space” as if to say, like Baudelaire, I too have my moments of contemplation “looking into the/ middle distance/ contemplating his image/ in Eternity”.

The speaker continues to assert that such contemplation is part of the particularity of any person; “they were his moments/ of identity”. Contemplation “into space”, in the speaker’s eyes, is nothing but “moments of identity” rather than of abstract thought. “Identity”, for the speaker, as it is for Ginsberg himself, is the ultimate reality of being; the only worthy source of existence and aim for the arts. “Poetry,” in his words “is the record of individual insights into the secret soul of the individual” (154). As such, the speaker considers “solitude” as the ultimate technique to gain insight into one’s identity: “It is solitude that/ produces these thoughts”. Of course, winter is the season most associated with the need to solitude and contemplation: “It is December/ almost’ where religious festivities begin: “they are singing/ Christmas carols”.

The poem’s language is simple. Its phraseology and vocabulary are largely parts of the daily American talk. Phrases like: “in front of the department/ stores down the block on/ Fourteenth

Street” seem by themselves unnecessary except for asserting the colloquial mannerism of the language employed. This mannerism is itself an integral part of the general emphasis on identity expressed by *Beats*’ poetics at large, and by Ginsberg’s in particular. The more natural and spontaneous the employed language, the more expressive of its user’s particular personality. Here, form expresses ideology; both poetic and cultural. Its colloquialism advocates the common man and rejects the elite, its simplicity values communication over authoritarian claims to knowledge, its spontaneity upholds the individual over the flock mentality, its disregard to grammar elevates personality over the security of structured realities, its sincerity promotes identity and truth over abstraction and sophisticated confusion regardless of historical authority. Understood as such, form here becomes ideology enacted in aesthetics.

From a poetic perspective, the fluid verbosity of the language employed reflects a deep advocacy of commonness and individuality together as worthy aesthetic goals in, and by, themselves. When coupled with uniqueness, common language and forms liberate and reaffirm identities in readership. They increase the individual’s sense of being and right to liberty. The individual is then not afraid to express him/herself in the language of his/her own personality without fear of repression or a sense of inadequacy. On cultural grounds, the integration between commonness and individuality celebrate individualist non-conformist particularity as the only path for a true will to freedom from oppressive institutional systems and canons. Their cultural impact on readership, the poems seem to argue, is to install much more inclusive and democratic principles of poetic exchange than previous esoteric forms. Ginsberg argues:

Trouble with conventional form (fixed line count and stanza form) is, it’s too symmetrical, geometrical, numbered and pre-fixed—unlike to my own mind which has no beginning and end, nor fixed measure of thought (or speech—or

writing) other than its own cornerless mystery—to transcribe the latter in a form most nearly representing its actual “occurrence” is my “method”—which requires the skill of freedom of composition—and which will lead poetry to the expression of the highest moments of the mindbody. (156)

*After Dead Souls* is a very short and straight to the point sort of poem. It contains a single exclamatory question of the path taken by the speaker’s country; “Where O America are you/ going in your glorious/ automobile”. The description praises the speaker’s country calling its vehicle “Glorious”, as much as it questions its ways; “towards what crash/ in the deep canyon”. The speaker wishes his country to take a different path for a better future “racing the sunset/ over the Golden Gate”, “jumping with jazz”. The implication is quite obvious. The speaker, in fact puts a choice before his country, which he sees as beautiful and glorious anyways. Either his country in all its beauty and vitality takes the path of destruction and oppression which will eventually lead to its demise, or that of beauty, art and justice which will eventually lead to happiness and fulfillment.

Like “Marijuana Notation”, this poem offers comfortable reading experience where the language of everyday life is poetically utilized for aesthetic purposes. Phrases like “careening down the highway” “western Rockies”, “over Golden Gate”, “wild city”, “jumping with jazz” are not only common and easy to comprehend and relate to, but, more significantly, non-pretensive. The message is quite straightforward making the argument that in order to be significant and deep there does not have to be any form of esoteric or elitist referencing or symbolism. Only being oneself, with all what this might mean in terms of individuality and freedom, is quite enough to achieve the goal. Even the shortness of the poem is significant arguing that the bigger the question, the simpler its form and components should be.

A very close friend of Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac (1922-1969) once called this general attitude towards language and the individual as *Beatitude* combining a largely spiritual, if religious, conception of life, with this deeply incarnated disdain all *Beat* poets hold for established power structures in politics and the arts (Kerouac 565). *Beatitude*, is the designation of the whole mindset of the *Beat Generation* as Bohemian and anti-cultural, while, *Beatific*, as Kerouac terms it, is their intense difference in formal and artistic attitude from other groups and writers, both past and present ((Kerouac 566). These. and many other terms, seem to define the cultural particularity of their poetics, as much as their general sense of marginalization and loss in a culture dominated by main-stream everything from media to academia, and from politics to aesthetics. The Beats were the lost souls of an over generalizing culture governed by pretense.

#### 7- Conclusion

However, titles, designations and labels do not by themselves mean much, until and unless, their power of reference is sufficiently backed by solid actions in reality as readers have observed in the practices of such *Beat* writers as Ginsberg. This is what this article has argued all through, which might be summarized in the following points:

- 1- The *Beat Generation*, or movement is a loose group of writers who started their work in Greenwich Village, San Francisco in 1940s following World War 2. They have continued their work till they rose to fame, institutional recognition and eventual canonization in the 1960s and 1970s. Chief among them were William S. Burroughs, Jack Kerouac, and Allan Ginsberg.
- 2- The main mark of these writers' aesthetic and cultural ideals has been dissidence and bohemianism in the full cultural meanings of the terms. They rejected capitalist consumer society, and its canonization of certain aesthetic ideals and practices such

as complexity, historical referentiality and symbolism that promoted conformity with the status-quo and lead to control of the masses. They also rejected any form of elitism in the high arts and its intellectual hierarchy, claim to knowledge, and political authority, which they viewed as the basis of human brutality and War.

- 3- Instead, they exalted the individual and his/her freedoms above all else. Freedoms of speech, of sexuality and of the pursuit of happiness are the most fundamental ideals of their lives and work. As represented by the work of Allan Ginsberg, this included spontaneousness, colloquialism, profanity, and the practicing of alternative life-styles which included soft drugs, homosexuality, and vagabonding as means of exploring individualist liberties and rejecting imposed systems of aesthetic and cultural control.
- 4- The slogan “art for art’s sake” was thus replaced by the active elimination of traditional distances between art and life, as demonstrated in this article by the work of Ginsberg. What Ginsberg calls “unconditioned individuality” (155) becomes both the source and the actual medium of poeticness in the language of the work. Life, in its alternative, anti-establishment, and no-conformist style becomes itself the written work of art presented as it is on the page for all levels of sophistication and commonness to re-live and uphold.
- 5- The difference between the *Beats*’ poetics and those of their contemporaries and immediate precursors with regards to poetic experimentation, is simply humongous. In terms of form, *Beatitude* is essentially a haphazard spontaneous reflection of the poet’s psyche. It represents an outpouring of personal feelings in unique colloquial language with no specific “order” or predetermined “structure” that has to be disentangled or decoded by readers in order to “get” the ultimate “message” of the

poem as is the case in *Imagism* or *Objectivism*, for example. Rather, there is only the speakers' own life made into words "with no beginning and end" as Ginsberg points out, "representing its actual "occurrence", which requires the skill of freedom of composition and which will lead poetry to the expression of the highest moments of the mindbody" (156).

Works cited

Allen, Donald M., ed. *The New American Poetry, 1945–1960*. New York: Grove, 1960.

Arnold, David. *Poetry and Language Writing: Objective and Surreal*. Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2007.

Aronowitz, Alfred. “The Beat Generation, Part IV,” *New York Post*. Mar. 12, 1959.

Beach, Christopher. *ABC of Influence: Ezra Pound and the Remaking of American Poetic Tradition*. Berkeley & Oxford, 1992.

Belgrad, Daniel. “The Transnational Counterculture: Beat-Mexican Intersections”, *Reconstructing the Beats*. Edited with an Introduction by Jennie Skerl, New York, Pelgrave McMillan, 2004, pp. 27-41.

Belletto, Steven. “Yugen at the Front”, *The Beats, Black Mountain, and New Modes in American Poetry*. Edited by Matt Theado, Clemson & Liverpool, Clemson University Press, 2021, pp. 63-80.

Bohn, Willard. *Reading Visual Poetry*. Marland USA and Plymouth UK, Fairleigh University Press, 2011.

Bohn, Willard. *Apollinaire on the Edge: Modern Art, Popular Culture, and the Avant-Garde*, New York, Editions Rodopi, 2010.

*Britannica Concise Encyclopedia*. Chicago & London, Encyclopedia Britannica Incorporated, 2006.

Calonne, Stephen. *The Spiritual Imagination of the Beats*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2017.

Cappucci, Paul. ““There is a kind of Revival you would dig taking place”: William Carlos Williams and the” Beat” Issue of the Black Mountain Review”, *The Beats, Black*

- Mountain, and New Modes in American Poetry*. Edited by Matt Theado, Clemson & Liverpool, Clemson University Press, 2021, pp. 47-62.
- Cook, Bruce. *The Beat Generation*. New York, Scribner, 1971.
- Cuddon, J. A.. *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*. London, Penguin, 1977.
- DuPlessis, Rachel Blau. & Quartermain, Peter. "Introduction", *The Objectivist Nexus: Essays in Cultural Poetics*. Introduced and edited by Rachel Blau DuPlessis, & Peter Quartermain, Alabama, University of Alabama Press, 1999, pp. 1-24.
- Fazzino, Jimmy. *World Beats: Beat Generation Writing and the Worlding of U.S. Literature*, Hanover, New Hampshire, Dartmouth College Press, 2016.
- Edgar, Allan Poe. *Collected Works of Poe, Volume 5*. Webster's German Thesaurus Edition, San Diego, CA, ICON Group, 2005.
- Gair, Christopher. *The Beat Generation: A Beginner's Guide*. Oxford, Oneworld Publication, 2008.
- Ginsberg, Allen. *Howl and Other Poems*. Introduced by William Carlos Williams, San Fransesco, City Lights Books, 1956.
- ,----- . *The Essential Ginsberg*. Edited by Michael Schumacher, New York & London, Harper Collins Publishers, 2015.
- ,----- . *Collected Poems: 1947-1997*. Sydney, HarperCollins Publishers, 2006.
- Grace, Nancy M. and Skerl, Jennie. "Introduction to the Transnational Beat: Global Poetics" *The Transnational Beat Generation*. Edited with an introduction by Nancy M. Grace and Jennie Skerl, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, pp. 1-15.

Hart, George. ““to open your ears”: Typing, Time, and the Body in Beat and Black Mountain Poetics”, *The Beats, Black Mountain, and New Modes in American Poetry*. Edited by Matt Theado, Clemson & Liverpool, Clemson University Press, 2021, pp. 81-95.

Halasz, Judith R. *The Bohemian Ethos: Questioning Work and Making a Scene on the Lower East Side*. New York and London, Routledge, 2015.

Hemmer, Kurt. “The Janus-Face of American Rugged Individualism: Edward Dorn’s *Gunslinger*, the Beat Generation, and Simulacra”, *The Beats, Black Mountain, and New Modes in American Poetry*. Edited by Matt Theado, Clemson & Liverpool, Clemson University Press, 2021, pp. 109-124.

Holton, Robert. ““The Sordid Hipsters of America”: Beat Culture and the Folds of Heterogeneity”, *Reconstructing the Beats*. Edited with an Introduction by Jennie Skerl, New York, Palgrave MacMillan, 2004, pp. 11-26.

Holmes, John Clellon. “This Is the Beat Generation”, *New York Time Magazine*. November 16, 1952.

Hyde, Greet Anne. *Calligrammes: Poems of Peace and War*, Los Angeles, London, University of California Press Berkeley, (1980).

Jennison, Ruth. *The Zukofsky’s Era: Modernity and the Avant-Garde*. Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, (2012).

Joughin, J. John, and Malps, Simon. “The New Aestheticism: An Introduction”, *The New Aestheticism*. Edited with an introduction by John J. Joughin and Simon Malps, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2003, pp. 1-23.

Keenaghan, Eric. “Imagintatively, go trans-ves”: John Wieners and the New American Poetry’s Queer Measure”, *The Beats, Black Mountain, and New Modes in American Poetry*.

Edited by Matt Theado, Clemson & Liverpool, Clemson University Press, 2021, pp. 95-108

Kennedy. X. J. “The New American Poetry,” *Poetry*. Volume 98, no. 4, 1961, pp. 243-253.

Kerouac, Jack. “*Beatific: The Origins of the Beat Generation*”, *The Portable Jack Kerouac*, edited by Ann Charters, New York: Penguin, 1996, pp. 565–73.

Mabley, Jack, “Daily News Column”, *Chicago Review*: <https://www.chicagoreview.org/from-the-cr-archive-coverage-of-the-big-table-fracas/> retrieved 07-27-2023

McCaffery, Steve. *Sound Poetry: A Survey*. Toronto, Under which Editions, (1978).

O’Neil, Paul. “The Only Rebellion Around: But the Shabby Beats Bungle the Job in Arguing, Sulking and Bad Poetry.” *Life*, 30 Nov. 1959: 114–30.

Pater, Walter. *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry*. Sixth edition, London, McMillan, 1901.

Pearson, Roger. *Stephane Mallarme*, London, Reaktion Books Ltd, 2010.

Perloff, Marjorie. *The Poetics of Indeterminacy: Rimbaud to Cage*. New Jersey & Surry, University of Princeton Press, (1981).

Polsky, Ned. “The Village Beat Scene: Summer 1960.” *Hustlers, Beats, and Others*. Chicago: Aldine, 1967. 150–85.

Preminger. Alex & Brogan, T.V.F., et al, (editors). *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1993, pp.62-63, 128-9.

Roberts, Neil. “Introduction”, *A Companion to Twentieth Century Poetry*. Edited by Neil Robert, Massachusetts & Oxford, Blackwell Publishing, (2001), pp. 1-7.

Reisman, Rosemary M. Canfield. “Introduction”, *Critical Survey of Poetry: Surrealist Poets*. Edited by Rosemary M. Canfield Reisman, New York, Salem Press, (2012), pp. 1-4.

Scroggins, Mark. *The Poem of a Life: A Biography of Louis Zukofsky*. USA, Shoemaker Hoard, (2007).

Skerl, Jennie. "Introduction", *Reconstructing the Beats*. Edited with an Introduction by Jennie Skerl, New York, Pelgrave McMillan, 2004, pp.1-10.

Solt, Merry Allen. *Concrete Poetry: A World View*. Indiana, Indiana University Press, (1968).

Starr, Daniel R.. "'I Want to Be with My Own Kind": Individual Resistance and Collective Action in the Beat Counterculture", *Reconstructing the Beats*. Edited with an Introduction by Jennie Skerl, New York, Pelgrave McMillan, 2004, pp. 41-57.

Stephenson, Gregory. "Introduction", *Daybreak Boys: Essays on the Literature of the Beat Generation*. Edited with an Introduction by Stephenson Gregory, Illinois, Southern Illinois University Press, 1990, pp. 1-17.

Sterrit, David. *The Beats: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013.

Strausbaugh, John. *The Village: 400 Years of Beats and Bohemians, Radicals and Rogues*. Sydney, HarperCollins Publishers, 2013.

Theado, Matt. "Introduction". *The Beats, Black Mountain, and New Modes in American Poetry*. Edited by Matt Theado, Clemson & Liverpool, Clemson University Press, 2021, pp.1-17.

Tryphonopoulos, Demetres P & Adams, Stephen J editors. *The Ezra Pound Encyclopedia*. London & Connecticut, Greenwood Press, (2005).

Toldy, Csilla. *The Ripples of History in HOWL*, internet article, 26-12-2018, <http://blog.pshares.org/index.php/the-ripples-of-history-in-howl/> retrieved 01-08-2023.

Ward, Geoff. *Status of Liberty: The New York School of Poets*. 2<sup>ND</sup> Edition, New York, Palgrave, 2001.

Wilentz, Elias. *The Beat Scene*. New York, Corinth, 1960.

