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The Theme of Wasteland in Allen Ginsberg's "Howl"

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Abstract

This paper explores the theme of the wasteland in "Howl" by Allen Ginsberg, noting that Ginsberg expands the boundaries enforced by T. S. Eliot's poem and finds his way through the wasteland of American society after the war. The poem "Howl" was first published in 1956, in which the fears of the generation in the face of political revolutions, existentialism, and alienation are brought forth. With impressive images and rich feelings, the poem is both a manifesto and a criticism of urban slums, mental crisis, and the chaos surrounding the meaning of life. Ginsberg's representation delves deep not only into the suffering caused by such situations but also presents the possibility of hope and awaiting redemption, instilling in readers the desire to face unbearable outcomes in hope of achieving understanding and closeness. It will also be argued that "Howl" is not simply a social commentary but a powerful proclamation of compassion and defiance in the face of nothingness, a testament to how struggle and the human spirit can change everything.

Keywords: wasteland, Allen Ginsberg, modernism, Beat Generation, urban decay.

موضوعة الأرض الخراب في قصيدة "العواء" لألين غينسبرغ

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الملخص

تتناول هذه الورقة موضوع "الأرض الخراب" في قصيدة "عواء" لألين غينسبرغ، مشيرة إلى أن غينسبرغ يوسع الحدود التي فرضتها قصيدة ت. س. إليوت، ويبحث عن طريقه في أرض الخراب داخل المجتمع الأمريكي بعد الحرب. نُشرت قصيدة "عواء" لأول مرة عام 1956، حيث تُبرز مخاوف جيل كامل في مواجهة الثورات السياسية، والوجودية، والاعتراب الاجتماعي. وبصور مبهرة ومشاعر غنية، تشكل القصيدة بياناً وموقفًا ناقدًا لأحياء المدن الفقيرة، والأزمات النفسية، وفوضى معنى الحياة. إن تصوير غينسبرغ لا يغوص فقط في المعاناة الناتجة عن هذه الأوضاع، بل يقدم أيضًا إمكانية الأمل وانتظار الخلاص، مما يغرس في نفوس القراء رغبة في مواجهة النتائج التي لا تُحتمل أملًا في تحقيق الفهم والقرب الإنساني. كما سيتم توضيح أن "عواء" ليست مجرد

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تعليق اجتماعي، بل إعلان قوي عن التعاطف والتحدي في مواجهة العدم، وشهادة على أن النضال والروح الإنسانية قـادـران على تغييـر كـل شـيء.
الكلمات المفتاحية: الأرض الخراب، ألين غينسبرغ، الحداثة، جيل البيت، تدهور المدن.

Introduction

The wasteland is a familiar and frequently recurring theme in many forms of art, representing solitude, gloom, and the ruin of morality. Allen Ginsberg, like T. S. Eliot, believes that the poet is an active participant in society—one who records and reflects upon its life—while remaining dedicated to the depersonalization of the poet's art. Furthermore, he seeks to determine the role of historical cultural inheritance as a bridge between past and present, allowing for the retention of traditional structures by reimagining them to create new perspectives and new themes. This intersection between Eliot's interwar ethos and Ginsberg's postwar anger culminates in their respective employment of the wasteland theme.

Ginsberg's *Howl* starkly confronts societal decay, critiquing the materialism and alienation of modern life while advocating greater empathy and consciousness (Hasan, 16). Through their respective works, Ginsberg and Eliot challenge poets to reflect on the complexities of human experience and the importance of artistic responsibility. In *The Waste Land*, Eliot's diverse references—literary, cultural, and religious—create an arras that reflects the complexities of identity and meaning: "These fragments I have shored against my ruins." (Eliot) Campbell (1998) states that "Ginsberg and Eliot share theories about the role of the poet, the function of a literary tradition, and the development of rhythm in poetry. In addition, Ginsberg directly addresses the theme of societal decay in *Howl*."

Ginsberg's groundbreaking poem tackles the wasteland as a potent reflection of the postwar American landscape, capturing the complexities of modern existence and the struggles of the human spirit. Written during a time of social upheaval and cultural transformation in the 1950s, *Howl* serves as both a cry of protest and a profound meditation on the alienation experienced by individuals in an increasingly industrialized and conformist society. Campbell notes that "Ginsberg lived in a world even more racked with devastations, weapons, drugs and problems..." (p. 7).

Like *The Waste Land*, which initially baffled readers and critics, many early readers viewed *Howl* as either a hoax or a chaotic mess lacking meaning (Smith, p. 38). Readers of Eliot were perplexed by jarring imagery and the use of foreign languages, finding the combination particularly offensive. Some of its harshest detractors seemed to lack experience with poetry, leading to a misunderstanding of its depth. Although *The Waste Land* was not overtly social in nature, it resonated with contemporary issues, evoking strong emotional reactions. Over time, it garnered followers who gradually embraced and interpreted its complex perspectives. Smith argues:

When first published, [Eliot's] *The Waste Land* was popularly seen as a hoax or a meaningless confusion, or as having a social meaning that made it detestable; for many, its ugly images and foreign languages combined into a double offensiveness. Possibly some of its severe critics had never read a poem before. It was not primarily social but it was disturbingly topical; one proof was the emotional stir it aroused. In time, the poem gained adherents who in some way assimilated its point of view. (p. 2)

Ginsberg argued that *Howl* should not be viewed solely as a negative critique of society, as it contains elements of hope and resilience. While it was initially received with skepticism and concern, Ginsberg believed the poem ultimately reflected a positive experience for him as a poet. He maintained that *Howl* served as an optimistic call to action, encouraging readers to confront the world with compassion and understanding. In a letter to Richard Eberhart, Ginsberg writes:

The title notwithstanding, the poem itself is an act of sympathy, not rejection. In it I am leaping out of a preconceived notion of social "values," ... allowing myself to follow my own heart's instincts, overturning any notion of propriety, moral "value," superficial "maturity," Trilling-esque sense of "civilization," and exposing my true feelings—of sympathy and identification with the rejected, mystical, individual even "mad." (*Letters*, p. 135)

Supremely extravagant, Ginsberg's poetic art highlights the problems faced by those off the cultural radar: the insane, the creative, the homosexuals, and all the oppressed. He paints a haunting picture of a wasteland filled with emptiness,

emotional anguish, and disconnection from society. Strikingly, even as the poem depicts hopeless scenes, it seeks restoration and new life. This places the poem in the tradition of meditative or reflective poetry in which the poet searches for connection and meaning.

In *Howl*, the motif of the wasteland lurks in the hopelessness and fragmentation of its characters, in urban emptiness and decay, in a world without a god to worship, and in the lack of beauty and purpose; the wasteland images are part of social contexts. Like Eliot, Ginsberg not only points out the wasteland of the present but encourages people to seek hidden hope amid conflict, urging readers to examine their own desolation while looking for ways out of it.

I. Methodology and Literature Review

1.1 Methodology

This study employs a qualitative, interpretative approach to analyze the theme of the wasteland in Allen Ginsberg's "Howl." The primary method involves close textual analysis, focusing on imagery, symbolism, and thematic elements within the poem to uncover how Ginsberg constructs and challenges the concept of wasteland in the context of post-war American society. Comparative literary analysis is also used to examine the influence and divergence from T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land," highlighting Ginsberg's reimagining of the wasteland motif within a modernist framework. Additionally, the study incorporates historical and cultural contextualization, situating the poem within the socio-political upheavals of the 1950s to deepen understanding of its thematic concerns. Secondary sources, including critical essays and scholarly interpretations, support the analysis to provide a comprehensive understanding of Ginsberg's poetic engagement with themes of decay, alienation, and spiritual desolation.

1.2 Literature Review

A significant body of scholarship reads *Howl* against modernist poetry and social critique. Campbell (1998) explores the relation between *Howl* and *The Waste Land*, positioning the former as a modern reinterpretation of the latter. Ginsberg gives Eliot's traditional wasteland a contemporary face by reworking motifs, imagery, and

themes to reflect the postwar American landscape and the existential crises of the Beat Generation. Thus, *Howl* inherits and transforms the motif, moving from Eliot's interwar spiritual and cultural disillusionment to Ginsberg's post-World War II urban and emotional decay. Reading *Howl* through both literary-formal and socio-cultural lenses clarifies its role as critical reflection on modernity and a call for spiritual renewal.

II. The Urban Wasteland

One of the most striking images in *Howl* is urban life as wasteland—desolation and alienation. References to “the negro streets at dawn” and “cold-water flats” (1937 ed., p. 1927) anchor experience in particular places while symbolizing the struggles of marginalized communities in oppressive urban environments. The imagery is visceral and chaotic, reflecting poverty, madness, and addiction. Ginsberg's boisterous, mid-century American cityscapes set him apart from the more universal (or Eurocentric) Eliot; he paints poignant, haunting scenes to emphasize the kind of existence Americans endure in the postwar milieu.

In Eliot's *The Waste Land*, the cities of the world are “unreal.” In Part III, “The Fire Sermon,” London is described as “unreal.” Ginsberg echoes and transforms this unreality. In his journal he wrote: “I came to the window and glanced out into the night space at the unreal city below in which I inhabit a building.” (qtd. in Raskin, p. 132) Those apocalyptic images resurface in San Francisco and in *Howl* find near-perfect expression. In “Sunflower Sutra,” he remembers the wastelands of New York and New Jersey—“Hells of the Eastern rivers, bridges clanking Joes Greasy Sandwiches, / dead baby carriages, black treadles tires forgotten and unretreaded.” (1944) Yet he marvels at a sunflower rising in the heart of the hellish urban wasteland—“A perfect beauty of a sunflower!”

The “angelheaded hipsters,” who “burn for the ancient heavenly connection,” are a key figure in this portrayal (“Howl”, 1927). Breathlessly, they walk the streets in search of unbridled fulfillment in a desolate setting that is breathtakingly beautiful but devoid of genuine closeness. Ginsberg is able to depict a dead world by the use of many sensory interactions, such as dazzling jazz in an otherwise melancholy setting.

For a long time, the city's streets and active people captivate the attention of suffering people rather than hatred.

Ginsberg's characters become representative of a greater effort to find purpose in the midst of chaos as they "drag themselves" through this urban wilderness. They are on an existential quest for meaning and purpose rather than just material survival. They resort to jazz as a way to express their emotions and transcend themselves in an attempt to connect with something bigger than themselves, but they are caught up in the gloom of their environment. The characters in "Howl" engage in a number of experiences, be it sitting in "backyard green tree cemetery dawns"(1928) or consuming "fire in paint hotels,"(1927) highlighting the juxtaposition of daily life with extraordinary experiences.

Imagery of public transportation (subways, trains) and endless journeys through the city are featured in the poem serving as a powerful metaphor for modern alienation and the mechanical routines of urban life. Ginsberg uses the experience of navigating the city to showcase the feelings of entrapment and disconnection that many individuals experience in the modern world. This contributes to a sense of being trapped in a mechanical routine, reflective of modern alienation (Hasan, 22). The characters "chained themselves to subways"(Howl, 1928) emphasizing the unavoidable cycle of urban existence. The line poignantly captures this sense of bondage to the rhythms of city life. It suggests not just a physical dependence on public transport but also an emotional and existential enslavement to the routines and structures of contemporary existence. (Foster, 1992)

The intricacy of the human experience as characterized by striking contrasts is highlighted by the continuous interaction between the vivid sound and the bleak images of deterioration. Although jazz music represents a throbbing vitality, it is frequently overtaken by the oppressive iciness of city life. Ginsberg's reflection on the essence of life in a society that commodifies personal experiences and traps its members in cycles of hopelessness and longing is reflected in this tug-of-war (Miles, 1989).

III. Mental and Emotional Wasteland

The poem is dedicated to a fellow poet Carl Solomon (1928–1993) who was back in another mental hospital. In his own words, Ginsberg insisted that "Howl" was a "gesture of wild solidarity, a message into the asylum, a sort of heart's trumpet call." (qtd. in Raskin 156). The mental wasteland theme covers the greatest part of the poem's tone, making it a banner for the postwar generation. In contrast to the banal and frequently harsh realities of urban living, Ginsberg's description of "angelheaded hipsters burning for the ancient heavenly connection to the starry dynamo in the machinery of night" (1927) expresses a desire for a transcendent experience. The term "hollow-eyed and high" (1927) highlights a condition of detachment and brokenness, underscoring the emotional desolation felt by persons in this wasteland.

Since everyone is stuck in their own unique experiences of desolation, the poem's repeated use of the pronoun "who" helps to forge a shared identity among people in pain. "Who cowered in unshaven rooms in underwear, burning their money in wastebaskets" (1927) is one line that conveys a sense of helplessness and the pointlessness of life. Such striking imagery depicts life engulfed in chaos and perplexity, suggesting a far more comprehensive criticism of the social circumstances that give rise to such hopelessness (Miles, 1989).

In Part II of "Howl", the personification of Moloch serves as a metaphor for the societal forces that contribute to this mental and emotional wasteland: "What sphinx of cement and aluminum bashed open their skulls and ate up their brains and imagination? \ Moloch! Solitude! Filth! Ugliness!" ("Howl" , 1933). Moloch, a representation of capitalism and industrialization, is invoked to show how these systems dehumanize people, resulting in loneliness and mental suffering. Ginsberg highlights the widespread impact of social pressures on mental health by relating these outside factors to the inner conflicts of the mind.

The refrain "I'm with you in Rockland" (1935) in Part III reflects the bond of solidarity among those grappling with madness. Ginsberg exposes the psychological and emotional costs of enduring such repressive powers as he presents Moloch. In the face of unrelenting social pressures, characters begin to doubt their own sanity and frequently wind up in institutions like Rockland, where they are deprived of

meaningful coexistence and true connection. Moloch represents a dismal future in which people are caught up in a generalized hopelessness that suppresses individuality and autonomy. It underscores a communal experience of anguish, as Ginsberg relates his own struggles to those of Carl Solomon and others in mental institutions. Lines like "where you scream in a straightjacket that you're losing the game of the actual pingpong of the abyss" (1935) articulate the helplessness that encapsulates their existence.

"Howl" presents a stark and unflinching examination of the mental and emotional wasteland, capturing the pain of individuals seeking solace in a world that often denies them the very humanity they crave. Ginsberg's work transcends personal narrative; it becomes a poignant commentary on the broader societal issues that give rise to mental and emotional anguish, rendering it a timeless cry for understanding and connection amidst despair.

Ginsberg's depiction of madness is a noteworthy aspect of "Howl." In his thoughts, he considers what will happen to the "best minds" of his generation who have been "destroyed by madness." (1927) This statement strikes a deep chord because it captures the collective agony that many people went through during a turbulent period in history. In Ginsberg's cosmos, mental illness seems as a regrettable commonality that represents the greater social disorder at work.

Within this emotional wasteland, Ginsberg's characters grapple with hallucinatory visions, addiction, and feelings of despair. The poem becomes a canvas upon which the complexities of the human psyche are explored. Ginsberg's repeated references to the treatments of mental illness—such as the "insulin Metrazol electricity hydrotherapy psychotherapy"(1932)—further illustrate a society desperately attempting to repress its turbulent human emotions, often resulting in tortured individuals confined to the cold, institutional walls of madness.

Moloch becomes a key player in comprehending the emotional wasteland portrayed in "Howl." A potent critique of the prevailing forces of materialism, inflexible expectations, and conformity, this personification of societal influences is strong. Moloch depicts a society in which societal summaries kill individual ambitions, as evidenced by expressions such as "the heavy judger of men."(1933)

Ginsberg reinterprets the old god Moloch as a symbol of the destructive powers of contemporary society, such as institutional neglect, capitalism, and war. According to 1933, he is "the loveless" and "the heavy judger of men," describing a spirit of ruthlessness that robs humanity of its own essence. Ginsberg uses Moloch's invocation to envision the soullessness that frequently accompanies capitalism endeavors—where individual lives are indistinguishable from mere commodities and profit triumphs over empathy. Moloch is "...the embodiment of capital, mass-industry, consumerism, war, and the rigid conformity of state power," according to Jaxon Parker's theory (43).

Ginsberg's imagery of Moloch's various manifestations—"whose mind is pure machinery," (1933) "whose blood is running money,"(1933) and "whose skyscrapers stand in the long streets"(1934)—illustrates the omnipresence of these forces in the modern landscape. Moloch's description serves as a poignant warning against the dehumanizing effects of industrialization and economic greed that engender emotional and mental wastelands for individuals striving for authenticity.

There is a recurring appeal for resistance and a tangible sense of collective sorrow as Ginsberg's characters scream out against Moloch. Parker states that Ginsberg "demonstrates how the established order of modernity and capitalism reproduces itself through the sacrifice of the youthful, creative, and innovative, rather than the 'aging,' established order itself" by reversing the regeneration myth through the character of Moloch (42). Their cries underscore the basic loss of identity endured in the face of repressive forces and reflect a strong desire for liberation from the limitations imposed by social expectations. The recurring symbol "Moloch!" is a multi-layered call to action and a last-ditch appeal for freedom from a society that treats people like insignificant cogs in a machine.

Moloch thus represents the social systems that greatly influence people's mental health. In order to regain their identities and personal power, people must understand how intertwined these forces are and unite to combat them, as seen by the frequent usage of his name.

Ginsberg demonstrates how the brutal mechanisms of power sacrifice the young, creative, and innovative in the name of preserving the dominant social order. This link

to absurdity and conformist idolization is first suggested in the line, "what sphinx of cement and aluminum bashed open their skulls and ate up their brains and imagination?" The mentions of "cement" and "aluminum" in relation to the idol of Moloch highlight not only the industrial nature of modern society but also underscore the inherent meaninglessness and absurdity of a system that willingly sacrifices its workers and artistic visionaries to its oppressive institutions (Parker, 44).

IV. Spiritual Wasteland

To make a comparison both the mid-1910s of Eliot's *Waste Land* and the 1950s of Ginsberg's *Howl* were spiritual deserts. T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) and Allen Ginsberg's "Howl" (1956) both illustrate the profound spiritual desolation of their respective periods, capturing the essence of existential crises. Indeed, according to Campell, "Ginsberg gave [Eliot's] the *Waste Land* a modern face by reworking it." (67) Eliot's poem, which depicts a fractured world where old values crumble and leave people adrift in a dead landscape, is born out of the agony of World War I. On the other hand, Ginsberg's "Howl" expresses the hopelessness of a generation strangled by superficiality while criticizing the consumerism and conformity of post-World War II society.

The pervasive theme of spiritual desolation emerges prominently, underscoring the struggles faced by the poet's generation. This "spiritual wasteland" reflects a profound emptiness experienced by many, resonating through the poem's vivid imagery and emotional depth. Ginsberg captures the plight of those who seek meaning in a world overshadowed by madness, addiction, and societal disillusionment. At the end of a letter to Eberhart, Ginsberg reiterated his main point of writing "Howl: [it] was not a work of "nihilistic rebellion." It was a religious work and if it advocated anything at all, it was the "enlightenment of mystical experience—without which no society can long exist." (Letters, 136)

This idea is attested to in the first words of "Howl": "I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving hysterical naked." (1927) In this instance, the word refers to both physical hunger and a deeper spiritual need, implying that the protagonists are starving for more profound understanding and connections rather than just battling with their immediate situation. Images of "angelheaded hipsters

burning for the ancient heavenly connection"—a passionate quest for transcendence in the midst of despair—highlight the struggle for spiritual sustenance.

While Ginsberg moves us through the landscapes of cities, we meet these people who “dragged themselves through negro streets at dawn looking for an angry fix,” (1927) in a ghostlike image that depicts despair. According to the poem, they have all been repeating like a bad dream; these characters acting as realistic present-time perspectives of anyone from the poets contemporaries whilst indulging in their addictions and submitting themselves to despair by running away temporarily for thin spiritual fare. The city turns into one of the characters in this history, turning into a moloch monster that devours on loneliness and lowliness — an eerie symbol for what biases to be seen as a nationalized spiritual void.

Moloch stands there in its sorrow, embarrassed and loud against the forces that ruin their town. Ginsberg describes Moloch as "the loveless" and "the incomprehensible prison,"(1933), and a stake driven through every heart(150) as he probes to reveal the extremities of resistance within spiritual endurance in faceless Modernist architecture. In personifying the idea that lifeless, implacable forces are persecuting them on every level of their respective beings, this representation serves to underscore a larger existential problem for those within “Howl”: these struggles aren't solely individual and inner but also societal/structural—the consequence of living in an environment that has systematically stripped away one's humanity from beneath itself.

It concludes with a powerful, almost hopeful resistance to the spiritual desert of which it tells. Yet, in the midst of such despondent waste land, a core vibrancy also remains as Ginsberg writes “who howled on their knees in the subway and were dragged off the roof waving genitals and manuscripts” (1939) equally authentic and unsuppressible. Ginsberg poignantly encapsulates the existential struggles of his generation, illustrating a profound sense of spiritual desolation. Right from the outset, he declares, “I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness,”(1927) vividly portraying the chaos and despair that enveloped the lives of his contemporaries. The poem captures the desperate search for meaning as individuals drift through urban landscapes “dragging themselves through the negro streets at dawn looking for an angry fix.” Ginsberg’s exploration of addiction, poverty, and

alienation highlights the yearning for connection—evident in lines like “angelheaded hipsters burning for the ancient heavenly connection to the starry dynamo in the machinery of night.”

The symbol "Moloch" acts as both a lament and protest to the mighty that rules their way of live. He repeatedly invokes Moloch, symbolizing the oppressive forces of modernity and capitalism: “Moloch! Solitude! Filth! Ugliness!”(1933) This personification serves to summarize the larger existential crisis that many of the characters in *Howl* face, suggesting that their struggles are not only individual but also systemic — meaning symptoms of a society which treats people as less than human beings as well. Moloch comes back, again and again; the name hollowed out until it's just another word for an ineffective system supporting a soulless order.

His declaration, “who created great suicidal dramas on the apartment cliff-banks of the Hudson,”(1930) resonates as both a cry of despair and an appeal for awakening. He juxtaposes personal and collective suffering with a call to resurrection, as he concludes with a vision of freedom: “the eternal war is here O victory forget your underwear we’re free.”(1936) Through "*Howl*," Ginsberg not only articulates the anguish of a generation but also champions the relentless pursuit of connection and transcendence amidst chaos and despair.

The spiritual dimension of the wasteland extends Ginsberg’s inquiry into the essence of human existence. Characters within "*Howl*" actively engage in self-destructive acts, revealing profound struggles with identity and purpose. This crisis is compounded by the disillusionment with the material world, highlighting a yearning for a higher truth and connection with something greater than themselves.

The characters’ experiences illustrate the tensions between spiritual aspiration and the harsh realities of modern life. Ginsberg captures the conflict between the yearning for transcendence and the burdens imposed by society—an encounter that often leads to despair and disillusionment.

Amidst the bleakness of "*Howl*," Ginsberg intersperses moments of hope and possibility, hinting at the potential for redemption. The poem's structure and rhythm also reflect this spiritual exploration, as Ginsberg strives to find meaning through

creative expression. Dreams and visions permeate the text, serving as vehicles for transcending the emotional wasteland.

In the wasteland, there is a spiritual dimension which is an extension of Ginsberg's demand about human's life value. The characters in "Howl" are quite often involved in self-destructive behavior as well, which indicates that there is more than just moisture in the air, but rather, intense, debilitating search for one's self. This crisis is put over a cushion of disappointment in the materialism of the world, and therefore, there is this desire to search for a truth, and to relate with something higher than oneself.

The experiences of the individuals are indicative of the relational tensions: that is, the one between the aspiration for spirituality and the modern day living. Ginsberg is able to show how society places elements that choke the spirit of a person who is yearning for something beyond the physical — an interaction that more often results in frustration and loss of hope.

As despondent as "Howl" is, Ginsberg also sprinkles in flecks of warmth and optimism, suggesting that it is possible to rise above the muck in a way that is redeeming. This quest foregrounds the structure and rhythm of the poem as Ginsberg attempts to impose his artistic signature for the purpose of making sense out of his pain and suffering. There are many dreams and visions in the text in order to go over the emotional desert. To Ginsberg, art is a means of oppression. It makes it possible for the individual to take back his right on the story. In his poetry, he not only confronts the anguish of being but also aims to encourage the reader's creative impulse and relationships as a healing exercise.

VI. Conclusion

The wasteland theme in Allen Ginsberg's "Howl" is dense and tormenting, and yet it succeeds, striking a balance between sharp critique and contemplation of humanity. Like many poets before and after, Ginsberg has drawn major inspirations from T.S. Eliot's poem "The Waste Land". In Ginsberg's work, there is a look back at the American post-war development, where there is the distraught society, survivor's guilt and alienation all at once. Through the internal and external decay of cities, Ginsberg

portrays the fight of an entire generation scorched by the rage of modern civilization, neglect, and pressuring to fit in.

However, Ginsberg's "Howl" is more than a cry of pain. It is an urgent appeal to empathy, searching for one's self in one's alienation and perseverance. Between despair and chaos there are flickers of light, encouraging the audience to face their own abysses and strive for some order in the relation to other people in this world. Moloch's imagery depicts the decadence of capitalism and apathy of societies.

In contrasting the harsh conditions that define the life of the city with the pursuit of spiritual grace, Ginsberg draws the line that urges one's artistic creation. He dares the audience to adapt and make efforts to be real in the harshness without fear, that is sew up the pieces of self to attain wholeness through creative work. All in all, 'Howl' is a record of the pain of that era but it also provides readers with a reflective understanding on the power of the spirit in redemption even in one of the most miserable sceneries.

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