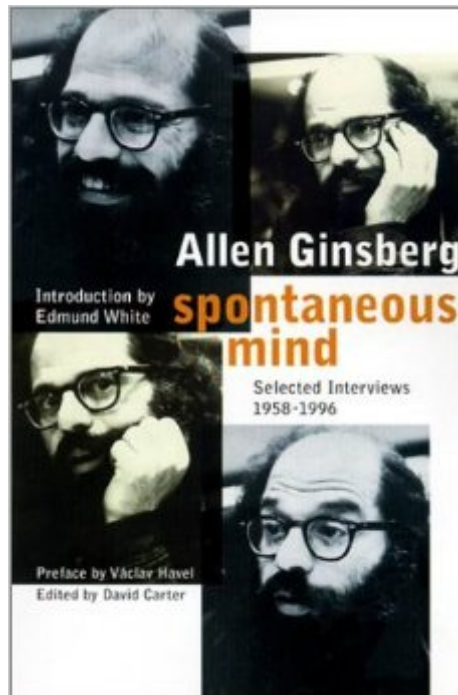


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Spontaneous Mind: Selected Interviews, 1958-1996



Synopsis

The interviews collected in *Spontaneous Mind*, chronologically arranged and in some cases previously unpublished, were conducted throughout Allen Ginsberg's long career. Always a candid and engaging subject, Ginsberg considered the interview an art form, as well as an opportunity to get his message across to many people, which, as a student of Eastern religions, he believed was his spiritual obligation. In these interviews, dating from the late 1950s to the mid-1990s, Ginsberg speaks frankly about his life, his work, and the events of his time. Ginsberg's progressive and controversial views on politics and censorship dominate his interviews, from his conversation with the conservative William F. Buckley on PBS to his comments in the *Dartmouth Review* about U.S. policy in Central America to his testimony at the Chicago Seven trial. Ginsberg discusses his literary influences, including Ezra Pound, William Carlos Williams, Walt Whitman, and William Blake, and offers insights into his own poetry, particularly his innovations in rhythm, meter, and syllable emphasis. A well-known experimenter with drugs, campaigner for their legalization, and believer in their ability to expand consciousness, Ginsberg here describes his LSD trips and his marijuana highs, and explains how they influenced the creation of "Kaddish" and other works. And he talks about his personal life with candor, revealing details of his sexual affairs with fellow Beats Jack Kerouac, William Burroughs, and Neal Cassady, and his longtime relationship with Peter Orlovsky. Provocative and illuminating, *Spontaneous Mind* allows us to hear once again the impassioned voice of one of the most influential literary and cultural figures of our time.

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Customer Reviews

This book is loaded with information and after almost 600 pages later; here I am with an overview. Most of the books I read tend to be around 200 to 300 pages, so this book is like two or three books put together, consisting of different interviews from the 1950's to the 1990's and a very mixed bag, packed with intriguing thoughts of poetry, prosody, prose, Ginsberg and the Beatific scene that emerged from the late 1940's that subsequently influenced the psychedelic generation of the 60's. There is some real insightful information on poetry here, very educational and foundational to the beatnik poetic movement, and poetry in general. Ginsberg relates his influential poets that inspired him, molding his thought processes and way of life. From Ezra Pounds, Walt Whitman, the painter Cézanne, William Carlos Williams, Gertrude Stein, Rimbaud and from 1948 a mystical experience with the words of William Blake, whose voice appeared to him after masturbating and subsequently experiencing some other mystical visions and awareness. Blake, although not a living person from our time era, became Ginsberg's guru upon the advice of an Indian teacher. In some cases of poetry and linguistic teaching of stanzas and crescendos, I was reminded of Peter Eckermann's, Conversations of Goethe and their discussions. There are great explanations of the spontaneous style of poetry, the Buddhist flashes of thoughts that come from the spaces between thoughts, that spring up in the perception of the moment, the present flash to be written down in that precise way, the style of momentary thought speech converted into writing and there you have Kerouac and Ginsberg and Burroughs, except with Burroughs it is with flashes of mental pictures converted into words.

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