CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION
I

In the holocaust of the Second World War all the traditional human values were almost lost and the aridity of this world became once more affirmed. Man standing at the crossroad looked at the scene where there were ashes of the past and future stood uncertain; where his own existence was on the brink of extinction. It was not only the "Crisis of power civilization" but it was also a "wholesale denial of human needs and values."  

America went all out in its attack on communism which had been proving menace to it, having got strong foot-hold in Russia and in its neighbouring countries. The Marxist alienation of the thirties was not a passing phenomenon. It was an "anti-fascist movement" not confined to communists but cut across all party lines from Left to Right, drawing its adherents from all classes and continued even after that.

To combat communism was needed some strategy which was a "War on Communism" which "created an atmosphere of coercion and conspiracy." America had been a free country where individuality had a free play, people enjoying full freedom. But in the changed circumstances "the nation's legacy of individuality had been changed
to a more standardized expectation of what constituted "Americanism". America had a glorious tradition of tolerance for ideological differences but now it had to resort to "organization and political similitude." John Tytell aptly describes this change as follows:

It was a bitter and ironic distortion of our history, the character of the country had always been as various as its topography, and the lack of homogeneity meant that Americans had to work to develop a national consciousness resilient enough to embrace the aspirations of multitudes. Suddenly, there was an alleged contagion of treasonous spies, a mania for internal security, a repression that fostered anxiety and discouraged dissent. Some vital ingredient of the "American Dream" was warped and out of control.

In the early fifties America had to face problems from all fronts; economic, social and cultural. There was an introduction of electronics, computers and automation which was to usher in a new revolution but very few people understood its import. In fact, these things were to have a great impact on social and intellectual life of the Americans. After the end of the Korean War, America was in a state of economic depression. The war had two-fold effect on American life. It "represented a qualitative leap forward in technology and a log in all other factors." The morale of the
people was at its lowest. Kenneth Rexroth writes about the war situation:

The Korean War took place within the effective memory of the Second World War. The academic and intellectual establishment, Left, Right and Center was shattered, demoralized and discredited by the years of MacCarthyism. Young men by the thousands were returning from the Korean war to the Colleges, disillusioned and contemptuous of their elders... Communication between groups broke down. Only those of the older generation who had remained defiant were respected, listened to, questioned. Just as the Army took years to discover the almost total breakdown of morale in Korea, so the older intellectuals were unaware that a volcano was building up under them.

The young people harboured contempt for their elders and were unequivocal in giving utterance to their feelings. They told each other not to believe anybody over thirty. There was hardly any communication between the groups and young men and women were simply bewildered. It was a time when the generation which had known World War II as children, was growing up. "At the top America was in the hands of a sort of regency." 11

The Korean War ended in a bloody stalemate and there was a wholesale breakdown of morale. The intellectuals and those who believed in moral principles had no courage of conscience and they cringed in front of the authorities who brooked no challenge. Kenneth Rexroth records:
College professors complained that they were facing silent generation who received their lectures with the response "no comment". Nihilism in public life was reflected in nihilism amongst young intellectuals. The intellectual establishment, in fact, many of whom were ex-communists, largely supported MacCarthy. Nihilism in authority breeds nihilism in response ..."

There was an atmosphere of "infidelity"¹⁴ in politics and it was a time of "false securities and mistrust".¹⁵ There was a demand for conformity and regimentation in thinking which created a spirit of isolation for those who believed in individual freedom. The result was an emergence of "mass society".

Van Wyck Brooks summarizes views of Erich Fromm who thinks that modern life

.....breeds the feelings of insecurity, powerlessness, fear and personal insignificance. The modern industrial system adds to that feeling and engenders internal compulsions and restraints which prevent the individual from using his freedom. Democracy frees him from external restraints but it is useless because it does not help him to establish his own individual existence and gigantic forces in the outer world play upon him constantly and destroy his personal judgement and his personal feeling.

He further summarizes :

"The vastness of modern cities, the mountainlike buildings, the radio, the newspaper headlines perpetually changing, create a massmindedness in him that
reduces to nothing his sense of himself in a world to which he might otherwise have felt he belonged. 17

In such an atmosphere freedom becomes a mere mockery and man seeks refuge somewhere else where he wants to have a real taste of it. Feeling himself powerless he seeks other forces which might give him protective cover.

Van Wyck Brooks observes:

His freedom then tends to become an intolerable burden and, as eager to escape from it as his fathers had been to fight for it, he finds a new security in one of two fashions; uniting with others who feel equally powerless and alone, he seeks for a leader who will give him the word of command, or he conforms with any process in which he can lose himself and, if he becomes an automation, so much the better. 18

The post Second World War society was characterized by homosexuality, increase in prostitution and sex-mania, and general perversity. On the one hand, there was unemployment and poverty, and on the other, rich people revelled in the life of corruption. The life of the poor was marked by a sense of frustration and had an uneasy feeling of loneliness and alienation. Kazin points out:

American society is remarkable for the degree of loneliness (not solitude) in which the individual can find himself. In our mass age, the individual's lack
of privacy, his unlimited demand for self-satisfaction, his primary concern with his own health and well-being, have actually thrown him back on himself more than before.

The period witnessed a complete denigration of man which raised basic issue of survival in the earth-quake weather, when a man was likely to be blown up any time. It was the swift movement from "summer into winter or what seemed to be summer." The world was no more a happy place but a veritable nightmare of "dark corridors and blind alleys."

The post Second World War situation was making man to sink in oblivion for he saw no hope in life in this regimented world which was not directed by democratic values or governed by rationality but by "Big Brother" and the "Thought Police" of which George Orwell wrote in his most famous novel, Nineteen Eighty Four. The events were such that they left deep scars in the collective unconscious of the peoples, destroying their hopes, together with their faith and trust in human beings and, this human failure was more catastrophic. It killed the very spirit of an individual, breeding nihilism in him. The whole situation is brought out very clearly by Norman Mailer in his essay The White Negro:
For the first time in civilized history, perhaps for the first time in all of history, we have been forced to live with the suppressed knowledge that the smallest facets of our personality or the most minor projection of our ideas, or indeed the absence of ideas and the absence of personality could mean equally well that we might still be doomed to die as a cipher in some vast statistical operation in which our teeth would be counted, and our hair would be saved, but our death itself would be unknown, unhonoured and unremarked, a death which could not follow with dignity as a possible consequence to serious actions we had chosen, but rather a death by deus ex machine in a gas chamber or a radioactive city, and so if in the midst of civilization—that civilization founded upon the Faustian urge to dominate nature by mastering time, mastering the links of social cause and effect in the middle of an economic civilization, founded upon the confidence that time could indeed be subjected to our will, our psyche was subjected itself to the intolerable anxiety that death being causeless, life was causeless as well, and time deprived of cause and effect had come to a stop.

But the truth that emerged from this situation was the realization that man himself was responsible for his undoing, making this century "sick paranoiac" and this interest from sociology to eschatology is all the more important for his future action. The Second World War was pointer to this realization.

The Second World War presented a mirror to the human condition which blinded anyone who looked into it. For if tens of millions were killed in concentration camps out of the inexorable agonies and contractions of super-states founded upon
the always insoluble contradictions of injustice, one was then obliged also to see that no matter how crippled and perverted an image of man was, the society he had created was nonetheless his creation, his collective creation ---- and if society was so murderous, then who could ignore the most hideous of questions about his own nature?

John W. Aldridge aptly says, "somewhere along the way tomorrow had been lost."²⁵

II

The Emergence of the Beat Generation has to be viewed on this background. It is the "phenomenon"²⁶ of an American existentialist. The hipster and the beatnik are the products of this and inspite of their apparent distinctions they have similarities and many a time they are used synonymously.

--- The hipster who knows that if our collective condition is to live with instant death by atomic war, relatively quick death by the State ----, or with a slow death by conformity with every creative and rebellious instinct stifled ... if the fate of twentieth-century man is to live with death from adolescence to premature senescence, why then the only wise-giving answer is to accept the terms of death to live with death as immediate danger, to divorce oneself from society, to exist without roots, to set out on
that uncharted journey into the rebellious imperatives of the self. In short, whether life is criminal or not the decision is to encourage the psychopath in oneself, to explore that domain of experience where security is boredom and therefore sickness, and one exists in the present, in the enormous present which is without past or future, memory or planned intention, the life where a man must go until he is beat, where he must gamble with his energies through all those small or large crises of courage and unforeseen situations which beset his day, where he must be with it or doomed not to swing.

America after the Second World War was heading towards totalitarian ideals symbolised in its expectation of conformity where nationalistic feeling would have upperhand over internationalism, at the cost of killing individual spirit. Graver still was its partial totalitarian emergence where there was a greater demand for courage from the people because in such a state uncertainty reigns supreme and it becomes hard to calculate what will follow, involving disproportionate courage. The natural corollary to this was that there were "urban adventurers who drifted out of night looking for action" with a black man's code to fit their facts."28 This is how hipster started living and the beats dug for reality and found a mode of existence.
Norman Mailer describes criteria for an existentialist:

To be an existentialist, one must be able to feel oneself—must know one's desires, one's rages, one's anguish, one must be aware of the character of one's frustration and know what would satisfy it. The overcivilized man can be an existentialist only if it is this, and deserts if quickly for the next chic. To be a real existentialist.... one must have one's sense of the 'purpose'—whatever the purpose may be—but a life which is directed by one's faith in the necessity of action is a life committed to the notion that the sub-stratum of existence is the search, the end meaningful by mysterious; it is impossible to live such a life unless one's emotions provide their profound conviction.

Like Hemingway they believed that "in a bad world there is no love nor mercy nor charity nor justice unless a man can keep his courage." Like Hemingway they strongly believed that "what made him feel good became therefore the Good".

The Beat Generation was fully aware of American milieu, which developed in fifties essentially as business civilization. Therefore, they totally rejected this society, thinking themselves powerless to reform it but having still some role to play in it by establishing an alternative society. These bohemians were in permanent war with the people who
had too much of money and who controlled too many things, having all the economic power in their hands. But the war carried on by these Holy Barbarians was a novel war, fought not with war weapons but by peaceful means, avoiding all violence, Lawrence Lipton notes in the Preface to the Holy Barbarians:

When the barbarians appear on the frontiers of a civilization, it is a sign of crisis in that civilization. If the barbarians come, not with weapons of war but with the songs and icons of peace, it is a sign that the crisis is one of a spiritual nature.

Initial stage of reaction having passed over the creative mind of the Beat writers becomes active, working spontaneously, optimistically, fully aware of the odds around, creating a parallel world diametrically opposed to the one in which they have been conditioned. Sangharakshta, a famous English Buddhist monk, writes about the creative mind which is also the mind of the Beat writer:

The creative mind does not react. It is not dependent on, or determined by the stimuli with which it comes into a contact. On the contrary, it is active on its own account, functioning spontaneously, out of the depths of its own intrinsic nature. Even when initially prompted by something external to itself, it quickly transcends its original point of departure and starts
functioning independently. The creative mind can, therefore, be said to respond rather than to react... The optimism of creative mind persists despite unpleasant stimuli, despite conditions unfavourable for optimism, or even when there are no conditions for it at all. The creative mind loves where there is no reason to love, is happy where there is no reason for happiness, creates where there is no possibility of creativity.

The Beats are psychopaths, trying to create a new nervous system for themselves, which is generally based on their infancy, with a style of life which contradicts their parents and the early milieu. In this decision they believe in a certain instinctive wisdom that forces a dialectic to change their habits. "One must go back to the source of these creation, and so the psychopath exploring backward along the road of the homosexual, the orgiast, the drug-addict, the rapist, the robber and the murderer seeks to find those violent parallels to the violent and often hopeless contradictions he knew as an infant and as a child."

The psychopath knows what is good and what is bad for him and has courage to express a forbidden impulse actively which is a most fruitful way for him. He finds himself surrounded by imperatives and relations of the men and women among whom he lives. His search is for the good orgasm. He lives in a civilized
world with cultureless lining, where alienation and exploitation invariably cohabit. In these circumstances he wants to keep himself paradoxically enough, psychologically healthy.

The Beat finds an easy affinity with the Negro who is an object of hatred for the white Americans, which in turn creates a feeling of hatred for himself in Negro. The Negro, therefore, explores the moral wilderness, the hypocrisy of the civilized life. For the Square, he is a "delinquent or evil or immature or morbid or self destructive or corrupt."35

The Negro lives a life of uncertainty, and humiliation and is ever in a dangerous situation. In such a state paranoia becomes vital to survival as blood and the Negro could manage to survive and grow by following the need of his body.

Knowing in the cells of his existence that life was war, nothing but war, the Negro...could rarely afford the sophisticated inhibitions of civilization, and so he kept for his survival the art of the primitive, he lives in the enormous present, he subsisted for his Saturday night kicks, relinquishing the pleasures of the mind for the more obligatory pleasures of the body, and in his music he gave voice to the character and quality of his existence, to his rage and the infinite variations of joy, lust, languor, growl, cramp, pinch, scream and despair of his orgasm."
The Beats consider themselves as outlaws from the Church, the disaffiliated, because they are nonconformists in their ideals as they have rejected the society in which they are born. But they are not aimless wanderers; wandering gives them freedom, freedom from ties and taboos and from conventional patterns of life where morality amounts to slavery.

The aim of the Beat, of course, is wholesome, personal salvation, in a word, holiness, and the artist has always been in search of it, one way or another. The Dada movement which began in Zurich in 1916 and quickly spread to Paris where it became the basis of surrealism, sought to break up the habitual linear habits of thought by a deliberate derangement of the senses, the sensibility and what not, a misguided search that ended in a blind alley because it remained within the framework of duality, the opposites.

The Beat digs "the reality, the self which is only his real nature. The search of the holy barbarian is a search for the "Original Face". The American society was affluent and still held bright prospects with all its material richness, yet all was not well with it. It was corrupted by the cult of "Moneytheism". Nelson Algren called it "neon wilderness" and the eyes of Henry Miller it was an "air-conditioned nightmare."
The Square is an accuser and the disaffiliate is on the side of the accused because the accuser has his spokesmen most of whom are well-paid and have all the mass media at their disposal and can rely upon police and law which can be on their side in time of need.

The Beat deliberately chooses a life of poverty for it is his answer to prosperity. He believes that "It is important to make a living, but it is even more important to make a life."\(^42\) It is not the poverty of "indigence, intemperance, improvidence or failure."\(^43\) It only means that the goods and services he has to offer are not valued at a high price. It is a self-imposed poverty, with the Beat's dedication to it and is not only an art but a science of survival. "It has its strategies and logistics."\(^44\)

The Beat Generation disaffiliate does not take up big jobs for his aim is not to amass wealth but to survive marginally and limits himself to fringe jobs in the labour market, like painting a small house if he is an artist, trying to find part-time work to pay for his colours and canvases and keep some goods in the larder. Some take to cartooning and sculpting on a part-time basis in the studios and for some
ceramics has provided some income. Some artists do not mind teaching a few hours a week at some school or as private tutors.

The Beat spurns domesticity because he prefers wild, unrestrained life to the traditional which keeps him imprisoned. "Domesticity has the same effect on sex that it has on animals. It makes both tame and awkward. The beat prefer to think of themselves as cats. Cats have never been domesticated sexually." 45

The Beat looks for the sexual mystique in Henry Miller, "It is a metaphysical impersonation that constitutes "cool" sex among the beat generation." 46 The square might think it cold rather than cool. The beat is an essentially a-sexual but has no particular objection to sexual intercourse as long as it is conducted "quickly, clinically, and above all wordlessly". 47 'The Beat rejects the popular American concept that "success equates with Manhood." 48 The nonvirility of the Beat is often mistaken for homosexuality. Though the Beatnik rejects his marriage as a middle class shack", yet the wedding is an important event in the Beatnik Community. Caroline Freud writes about the marriage of the Beatnik:
He marries in the Ocean, only at midnight. He and his Beat Bride-to-be stand naked in the waves while the rites are performed by a Beatific friend who reads a self-composed hymnal ritual poem, which is then followed by a Lunar incantation. The bridegroom then silently hands the "chick" a ring of flowers which she must throw into the waves in order to symbolize that her hipster is giving himself to 'the real mama, the Ocean, the mama of the whole race of Man," but she is herself uniting with "The old Man of the Sea."

Caroline Freud further writes:

Non-Beatnik grandmothers and aunts are invited to attend those services, and often leave in tears before the wedding breakfast, which naturally takes place in a 'pad' and is as formal as the sea-wedding. The newly-weds sit in a semi-circle, composed of silently con-templative friends, "light up on muggles" (smoke marijuana) and continue their search for "the inner luminous experience."

The female Beatnik is characterized by a studied and aggressive a-sexuality and this is their reaction against the Hollywood emphasis on the breast and flashing lipsticked smile. The Beatniks are very particular about their dresses and the beat coffee-houses are characterized by their extreme gloom, and cathedral silences. The entertainment of the coffee-house consists of prose and poetry readings and folk-song which is the part of the quest for the "primitive beginnings". No alcohol is served for the Beatniks reject 'lushing' (drinking) as part of bourgeois "shuck".
It is generally misconceived that the term "Beatnik" signifies one who is beat in the sense of "down-beat", or "licked". To the Beat Generation it signifies "the beatific one". Jack Kerouac who was the originator of the term, says:

The word "beat" originally meant poor, down and out, deadbeat, on the bum, sad, sleeping in subways. Now that the word is belonging officially, it is being made to stretch to include people who do not sleep in subways but have a certain new gesture, or attitude, which I can only describe as a new more. 51

Jack Kerouac further says he is "Beat, that is I believe in beatitude." 52

Caroline Freud points out that

Beat philosophy is misty, mystical and eclectic. Claiming to embrace Zen, the Beatnik philosopher paradoxically rejects discipline; he therefore replaces the Zen Ideal of a total commitment to the moment by a Zen Ideal of a striving towards a state of totally non-committed contemplation. 53

Alan Watts makes distinction between a hipster and a Beatnik:

The "beat" mentality as I am thinking of it, is something more extensive and vague than the hipster life of New York and San Francisco. It is a younger generation's non-participation in "the American way of life", a revolt which does not seek to change the existing order but simply turns away from it to find the significance of life in subjective experience rather than objective achievement. 54
According to Alan Watts:

Beat Zen is a complex phenomenon. It ranges from a use of Zen for justifying sheer caprice in art, literature and life to a very forceful social criticism and "digging of the universe such as one may find in the poetry of Ginsberg, Whalen and Snyder and rather unevenly, in Kerouac..."

The Beatniks find Zen Buddhism propitious for the way of life they want to adopt in the world where they are ill at ease. They were impressed and influenced by Dr. D. T. Suzuki to whom much credit goes for propagation of Zen Buddhism in America. Suzuki writes what Zen signifies:

Zen in its essence is the art of seeing into the nature of one's being, and it points the way from bondage to freedom... We can say that Zen liberates all the energies properly and naturally stored in each of us, which are in ordinary circumstances cramped and distorted so that they find no adequate channel for activity... It is the object of Zen, therefore, to save us from going crazy or being crippled. This is what I mean by freedom, giving free play to all the creative and benevolent impulses inherently lying in our hearts. Generally, we are blind to this fact that we are in possession of all the necessary faculties that will make us happy and loving towards one another.
III

The post Second World War period saw the birth of many novels but despite its abundance it failed to enrich the art. They are realistic but are without complexity of the period which is one of the marks of great literature. The predominant event of the decade is war which is instrumental for such a big output of novels but these novels lack depth. The fiction is rich in facts but lacks subtleness. The novelists represent a kind of ideological battle fatigue and the isolation of intelligence which is the result of a large scale military pilgrimage to foreign lands. The characters in these novels show no sign of collapse of the tradition and think that the war is an "interruption of their privacy, and a dangerous interference with their normal lives."

The novelists of this period are naive about the war and cynicism of their characters is a result of their ignorance. They are concerned not with the collapse of the values but have no concern for any values at all. They implicitly and explicitly criticize American culture which stopped dubiously at a point where American soldier felt flabbergasted. These soldiers went from North Africa to Italy, to France,
leading usually to Paris, which held great attraction for the Americans and this "invasion of Europe's" cities has the quality of an "inverted pilgrimage." The sense of ignorance and boredom felt by the soldiers is aptly described by Frederick J. Hoffman in the following words:

"The American soldier visits Rome, Florence, and other classical centers of Italian life, feeling dirty, abused and bored. He is the fashioner of a violent dislocation of Italian life but pinpoint bombing and long range destruction scarcely gave him a clear notion of what it is invading."

The impression given by these novelists is the dirty and inconvenient break in the rhythm of the pre-war life. The Desertion does not constitute a major theme in these novels, nor do the novelists show any ideological heroics. Therefore, the novels of the Second World War are more honestly literal in their perspective upon events." Irwin Shaw's The Young Lions (1948) has ideological moralities of the 1930's; Glenway Wescott's Apartment in Athenae (1945) embodies a special view of civilization and John Steinbeck's The Moon Is Down (1942) shows a tender concern over persons of having any natural or ideological complexion.

The most ambitious and popular of World War II novels is Norman Mailer's The Naked and the Dead (1948).
The novel belongs to the familiar pattern of American radicalism and shows technical influence of Dos Passos and Farell. The novel is about the American sick society. Norman Mailer describes his intention of writing this novel:

intended it to be a parable about the movement of man through history, I tried to explore the outrageous propositions of cause and effect, of effort and recompense, in a sick society. The book finds man corrupted, confused to the point of helplessness but it also finds that there are limits beyond which he cannot be pushed, and it finds that even in his corruption and sickness there are yearnings for a better world."

Gore Vidal's The City and the Pillar (1948) is one of the first novels to depict homosexuality which it does very frankly. The repressed feeling of homosexuality finds expression in this novel. The hero Jim Willard drifts from place to place across America, from Hollywood to New-York by way of Texas and from one homosexual encounter to another, haunted by the memory of his adolescent love for his friend Bob Ford. Homosexual love is seen as "devouring", again a common view of it in American fiction. As John W.Aldridge observes:

There is no vitality or significance in the view of life which has gone into it. It seems to haveevolved out
of an absolute spiritual nothingness in which all things suffer from the same poverty of content and in which the vitally important and the cheaply trivial are viewed alike.

Paul Bowles is another novelist whose theme is the psychological disintegration. His novels are works of symbolism in which the world described is really the interior world of his characters. It is projected with great brilliance and Bowles has a great ability to suggest tropical heat and squalor, the seediness of exotic. His novel The Shattering Sky (1949) is an example of this. In his novels Bowles expresses the ultimate horror of nothingness. In spite of a series of physical attacks, readers are scarcely moved by them, because his characters have no value as human beings. Paul Bowles is a Gothic novelist who creates horror comics.

Truman Capote presents a self-contained world which refers to nothing outside itself and is a world of magic and fascination. It is a toy world in which there are decayed mansions, decayed families, degeneracy set in a landscape of swamps, forests and small isolated townshaps. This world has a fairy-tale illusion existing outside time but it is not as sinister as in Faulkner. It is the world of freaks.
In Capote's fiction we find many characteristics which mark contemporary American novel; the notion of the novel as a self-continued whole; the continuing preoccupation with childhood as a state beyond which lie anticlimax and degeneration with the child as a modern counterpart of the noble savage.

Frederick Bucchner's A Long Day's Dying (1949) is an example of the self-contained novel which shows smartness of characters.

William Styron's Lie Down in Darkness (1951) is a great novel which exploits both the self-contained form and the preoccupation with the South.

Flannery O'Conner treats South in a new way. She approaches the religious primitivism of the South, traditionally Protestant, from the standpoint of a Roman Catholic, and her theme is spiritual distortions. Her characters are grotesque because they are spiritually primitive and afflicted both in mind and body. Their lives are like nightmares that are both brutal and farcical. God is the sole reality in their lives and this is so even when they repudiate Him.

The Catcher in the Rye (1951) by Salinger has a significance that goes beyond literature. Walter Allen writes about it:
In some very important respects, it is the American novel of its generation, for in Holden Caulfield, Salinger has created a myth-figure with which millions of young and youngish Americans have identified themselves."

Holden, the hero of the novel, is fixated on the memories of his dead brother and on his little sister Phoebe. It has the notion of innocence against which seems to be set the idea of sex as a dirty, sordid thing.

Edward Newhouse handles a different theme in his novel The Temptation of Roger Heriott (1955) which is about the responsibility of a rich man. It praises domestic virtues and life. The theme on which John Phillips writes is also the richness of the people but not its praise. The Second Happiest Day (1953) records slowly and relentlessly the history of revolt against the very rich or, rather, against what James called 'the black and merciless things behind great possessions'.

Wright Morris is one of the liveliest American talents and in his novels he brings past and present together in a single moment of time. In him the bizarre, the pathetic and the Comic exist side by side. Love among the Cannibals (1957) is a formidable piece of social criticism.
In post Second World War American literature the novels of Negroes mark a new significant development. Richard Wright's Native Son and Ralph Ellison's The Invisible Man are extraordinary novels. Invisible Man is not a piece of naturalism but is a symbolic novel rendered in terms of the picaraesque. James Baldwin's Go Tell It on the Mountain (1954) deals with the Negro not as a social problem or as an oppressed minority but concentrates in one aspect of him and his way of life, the religion. The aspect grows out of his traditional situation in America and especially of his experience of slavery. This leads him to identify himself to his religion with the children of Israel in bondage in Egypt. The novel is an expression of the experience of a whole people, presented not as problem or in terms of propaganda but as it truly is.

Saul Bellow is a Jew who ranks among the great American writers of today. His Dangling Man (1944) and The Victim (1947) describe nightmares and this removes them from naturalistic plane and strikes an affinity with Kafka. The hero of Dangling Man is Joseph, waiting his call-up for the US Army in the early days of the war. He has a feeling that he lives in a void which makes him give up his job to study the philosophy of Enlightenment. In fact, he is trying to come to terms with himself and the society in which he lives. Joseph's
Problem is, he is not only a dangling man, but is a man who is alone, putting questions to society which it cannot answer. Dangling Man in its implication is a metaphysical novel.

The Victim, another novel of Bellow, is a complex novel and it brings out predicament of an urban man. The Adventures of Augie March (1953) is an extravert novel. It is set for the most part in the Depression years in Chicago. Henderson the Rain King (1959) is a myth of rebirth expressed in extremely romantic terms. Henderson at odds with his wife, his father, his children, his friends, goes to Africa, where he undergoes a series of symbolic actions, submits to a series of initiation rites which in the end make him a new man so that he returns to the United States to become at the age of fifty five a medical student.

Herbert Gold is an existentialist novelist. His best novel is Therefore Be Bold, (1960). The novel relates some years in the high school life of a group of friends in a town in Ohio in the late thirties. It captures beautifully the aspirations and confusions of intelligent adolescents. It is funny and affectionate.

Bernard Malamud and Bellow are the best and most remarkable of the American novelists. The Assistant (1957) is the most successful novel of Bernard Malamud
and its theme is the struggle for moral excellence, the wish to be good. It has a depressing milieu and the story is one of defeat.

Beat literature is a new phenomenon in the American literary world, and stands out because it contains tacit revolt against American life which has created its own fetters jeopardizing its own age-old values.

IV

In the early fifties there were literary editors and academicians telling the world that the age of experiment and revolt was over, implying that there was a complete breakdown of communication between the generations. At this time San Francisco was the one community in the United States which had a regional literature and art which was different from the existing mode. In the thirties it was a strong trade union town with leftist political ideas dominating. Immediately after the war a group of San Francisco writers and artists began an Anarchist Circle and held public meetings. This resulted in multiple cultural activities: there was a radio station, had three little theatres and magazines and a number of leading writers and artists. It was this sympathetic environment that the
Beat Writers discovered around the early fifties.

The Six Gallery reading is said to have launched the Beat Movement. Public reading of poetry had become a regular institution in San Francisco. One factor about the San Francisco culture is its closer connection with London and Paris rather than with New York. San Francisco intellectuals made contact with the London Anarchists during the Spanish War and during the Second World War all correspondence was kept up with people like Sir Herbert Read, Alex Comfort, George Woodcock and others.

Kenneth Rexroth observes the affect of this movement on the evolution of American Literature and culture: "It was the form in which the mass disaffiliation of post-war youth from a commercial, predatory and murderous society first came to the attention of that society itself." The difference between the Angry Young Men and the Beats is that the Americans rejected the entire social structure. They did not want to be admitted to the old Establishment and wanted to found a new one. They were interested in what the avant-garde between the wars called the Revolution of the Word. They were interested in attacking, disorganizing and Allen Ginsberg and Corso even wanted to reorganize the structure of human sensibility through revolutionary use of language, the overturning of the old pattern of logic and syntax.
In 1952, Jack Kerouac listed the chief members of the movement in a letter to Ginsberg, explaining that the "Crucial motivation for their union was the ability to honestly confess each other their deepest feelings."66

John Tytell writes about the beginning of this movement and its development:

"Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, William Burroughs, and a group of other writers, artists mavericks of inspiration like Neal Cassady, formed a "movement" which began near the end of the Second World War, found its voice during the fifties, became especially influential in the sixties." 67

The Beat writers came under the influence of Zen Buddhism about the time when the movement was striking roots. During the thirties a number of books in English appeared on Zen Buddhism, including Dr. Suzuki's famous book, Essays in Zen Buddhism. These were circulated among a few knowing people. It was not until after the World War II that Zen burst into full western bloom. Zen possesses some basic qualities as a way of life. Though it is considered by its followers as a religion, it has no sacred scriptures whose words are law. There is no fixed canon, nor is there any dogma. It does not believe in any saviour or Divine Being through whose favour or intercession one's
eventual salvation is assured. It allows certain air of freedom because there are no attributes common to all other religions.

V

Jack Kerouac was the son of Leo and Gabrielle, born in Lowell, a small textile manufacturing centre, a mill town, on the Merrimack River, in Northeastern Massachusetts, about thirty miles north of downtown Boston. The language spoken at home was French-Canadian joual. It was Kerouac's first language and he encountered a great difficulty in learning English. His family lived in Pawtucketville, a French-Canadian community in Lowell, Massachusetts, and it was a place where relatives and friends gathered frequently for holidays, weddings and funerals.

Leo, father of Kerouac loved independence and ran a small printing business to support his family. He was proud of his independence but was "excitable, generous, even extravagant man."68 In 1936, there was a disaster, for the river Merrimack overflowed and swamped Leo's plant. He was compelled to sell his house and had to move into a tenement and find work as a journeyman printer whenever and wherever he could. This
made him leave his house often and he could never regain his confidence which he once had. This enhanced the influence of Gabrielle in the house. She became powerful and combined in herself traditionalism and Catholicism and was devoted to her family. She was a great influence on Kerouac. She was individualistic in attitude and "tended to shun the world, especially its newness and looked to the past for guidance." Kerouac was in her full control. John Tytell observes; "She dominated her son, and much of his need for privacy and his suspicion of institutions can be traced to her influence. The tie between mother and son, was furthered after the war, by Leo Kerouac's physical decline." Leo was suffering from cancer and Jack kept himself engaged in writing novels in the kitchen and Gabrielle took upon herself the responsibility of supporting the family by working in shoe factories. Kerouac was haunted by the feeling that he could not take place of his father in supporting the family. He solicitously cared for Leo during the final period of suffering, morbidly fascinated by the "process of disintegration and death." Before Leo breathed his last he had asked his son to promise him to look after his mother for the rest of her life and Kerouac faithfully accepted this responsibility, and fulfilled it to his best ability.

Charlest E. Jarvis observes: "Jack's parents had a hold
on him emotionally, one that was capable of making him feel guilty.\textsuperscript{72}

During the year of his father's illness and death, Jack was concerned with atoning for his previous years of recklessness and wanderings. He stayed at home taking care of memiere while finishing his first novel that year. But the year 1948 saw his meeting with Neal Cassady which proved to be a turning point in his life. Jack had somebody to believe in, to confide in, and respond to. This was Kerouac's beginning of the Beat experiences, which would end with the belated publication of On the Road, in 1957, finished seven years earlier. The final phase in Jack's life begins with that publication date and ends with his death.

This time is characterized by his rejection of the role and image that he was cast into because he could not allow himself to feel good or responsible for a counter culture movement due to the personal things he felt he had to maintain within his family.\textsuperscript{73}

In fact, Kerouac wrote his first novel to satisfy his father by putting before him an explanation for what he had done. Jarvis notes: \textquote{The Town and the City was begun and finished as a sentimental romantic attempt to explain himself to his dying father.}\textsuperscript{74}
In 1950, the Town and the City was published, and he married a girl called Joan but the marriage lasted only six months. "In the year 1951, Jack wanted to find a new form of writing which would match the looseness and shapelessness of the experience he was trying to describe in his novels."\textsuperscript{75}

In Lucien Carr incident in which Kammarer was killed, Leo had refused to raise bail money for Kerouac who was arrested on the charge of his being material witness to a homicide. It was Edie Parker who bailed him out. Kerouac married her and the marriage ceremony was performed in City Hall with two detectives acting as witnesses. But Kerouac was unhappy that he had to live on the support of his wife’s relatives. He found a job in a factory, counting ball bearings. He was always ill at ease in the presence of wealth and power. He was naturally inclined to working class occupations where manual work was done with freedom from pretension and with a sense of satisfaction. Charles Jarvis writes; "It is clear that he was an anti-authoritarian personality unable to carry out the absurd orders of commanding officers or the orders of his father for that matter.\textsuperscript{76}

John Tytell feels that the involvement of Kerouac in the murder case was significant for
...it precipitated a weaning away from his family. From an artistic perspective, it revealed how his life and the lives of his intimates could be as suitable as subject matter for his art as any imagined fiction by Dostoevsky or Gide. His sense of himself and his friends as Nietzchean outlaws was confirmed."  

By this time Kerouac was deeply involved with William Burroughs and Allen Ginsberg but it was not without intense conflict. May be this was the reflection of his parents, who had warned him of the evil influence of his friends. He regarded himself as a "madman child" and recognized in both Burroughs and Ginsberg a commonality of spirit."78

Kerouac did not approve of his friends' "Wallowing in intellectual and emotional egocentricity, their perpetual analysis of motives."79 This was at variance with what he had believed: "his quest for centers of health, the desire to find godly attributes in himself and others."80

In 1946 the initial conjunction of the Beat Writers ended for Ginsberg embarked on a long freighter voyage and Burroughs left New York to start farming at Texas. His marriage broken, Kerouac returned to New York City and spent several weeks in Ginsberg's dormitory, reading voraciously. The members of the Beat circle had known each other for a short time, but they had
loyalties for one another which was forged in an atmosphere of reading, intellectual discussion, aesthetic exploration and much-drinking.

Kerouac identified Cassady with his elder brother Gerard. Cassady's visit to New York was brief, but his impression on Kerouac was indelible. Kerouac was to recognize a restlessly consuming part of himself that could not be satisfied by his writing alone and which was frustrated by his responsibility to his mother. Cassady sent Kerouac letters from Denver encouraging him to discover the American landscape through the fortunes of the open road. The effect was contagiously inspiring, and in the summer of 1947, Kerouac abruptly discontinued work on The Town and the City. Hitchhiking most of the way west, Kerouac began to appreciate the potential of a novel that could capture the vitality of America. His imagination was inflamed by the conception of a hero like Cassady who was capable of the kind of ecstatic outburst Ginsberg was to depict in "Howl".

The cross-country trip was a potent catalyst and Kerouac returned to New York to complete The Town and the City. At the same time, he began preliminary sketches for On the Road, feeling that the form of the book he had been writing was too contained for the
natural flow he wanted to release. It was then that John Cleellen Holmes met Kerouac. Holmes was greatly impressed by Kerouac's open-heartedness and his willingness to share his ideas. While Kerouac respected Holmes as a writer, he often felt his prose and person to be too analytical. In a letter to Ginsberg, Kerouac remarked that Holmes stood properly outside of the Beat Movement, observing it more than living it. The fruit of such detachment was Holmes' novel Leo which sought to embody Beat precepts in characters, based on Kerouac and Ginsberg. Kerouac also disagreed with Holme's leftist political sympathies, just as he denounced and detested Ginsberg's socialist ideals. He believed that "revolution was revelation." He felt that "...liberalism was merely a comfortable show for the middle classes, that grief for the suffering in the world was often just a rationalization of guilt, a solace of conscience." Kerouac returned from Mexico City to Ozone Park and was particularly attracted towards Bill Cannastra, a graduate of Harvard Law School. Cannastra was a strong man with "qualities of a mercurial energy" and would dance on broken glass, balance precariously from a window sill and climb to another window, antagonize and belligerently insult his guests, drink himself into
a stupor and pass out in his own vomit. He met with horrible death during the summer of 1950 while trying to exit through an open window of a running train. He had been living with a woman called Joan Haverty, a department-store waitress, and she remained in the loft after his death. Kerouac visited Joan on his trips to the city, and within two weeks they were married. This marriage lasted only six months and proved to be greatly troublesome afterwards. He was down with phlebitis and was hospitalized. This enforced rest seems to have been a period of final germination for the novel On the Road.

Kerouac completed On the Road by the end of April and left Joan Haverty two days later. Restless and overexcited, he agreed to accompany his mother to Rocky Mount where she intended to spend the summer with her daughter. Here he read Dostoevsky, Proust, Lawrence, Gorky, Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Yeats, Sandburg, Hart Crane and some of Hawthorne.

In January 1952, he moved into Cassady's attic. Cassady was working on the railroad. Kerouac had already begun Visions of Cody. Parts of Cody grew out of on the Road. He would remove a section from On the Road and elaborate it into a novel.
The tension in the Cassady household made him think of returning to Mexico. It was an opportunity for Ginsberg, Burroughs and Kerouac to free their imagination from its conditioning. Burroughs was injecting heroin and Kerouac too began to use it several times a week. While the drug intensified his depression, he still felt despair over the public failure of his writing still he began work on Doctor Sax, an experimental novel about his Lowell childhood. At this time he was struggling with the problems of identity and anonymity. Burroughs was preparing to leave Mexico for South America. Kerouac wrote Holmes that he felt surrounded by doom and death and was a destitute and starving. Joan Haverty had filed her paternity suit. He was the loneliest of writers. Exhausted and miserable he returned to Rocky Mount in August 1952 to be shocked by another surprise visit from Cassady. Kerouac joined the Cassadys on the West Coast but his disappointment with Cassady's egotism and material concerns, as well as complications with Carolyn, forced him to leave. Impoverished again, he found a room on San Francisco's skid row, worked as a yard clerk for the Southern Pacific and spent most of his time in his room writing "San Francisco Blues", a series of poems and "October in the
Railroad Earth", one of his finest short pieces. He was now like an exile in his own country. He began to work as a brakeman, hoarding his earnings in a resentful, self-pitying mood, feeling nostalgia for a girl named Mary Carney whom he had first loved at sixteen in Lowell.

Kerouac was back in Mexico City when Burroughs was preparing to depart. Unhappy and desolate as he felt, he thought Burroughs' fate was even worse than his. His friend had lost everything - Joan, children, even his patrimony. Burroughs left Mexico one night.

Kerouac returned to New York in time for Christmas. His mother had found a new apartment in Richmond Hill, Queens, and he remained there through spring, writing Maggie Cassady, in which he memorialized Mary Carney.

His peripatetic journeys continued until the publication of On the Road, in 1957.

Kerouac sustained himself spiritually during the years of denial by prolonged study of Buddhism. His interest in it began in 1954. He spent months reading in libraries, working with both primary and secondary sources, even translating some of the sutras from the French.

Edgar Cayce had voiced his views on reincarnation and Kerouac gave him a rejoinder quoting Buddhist
scriptures—the Lancavatere Sutra, the Surangama Sutra, the Diamond Sutra and many others in Goddard's Buddhist Bible.

John Tytell writes:

"Buddhism served to change the bent emphasis from defeat in the world to beatific acceptance, from a rage of self-assertān to a quiet watching, an eventful merger with entities larger than the self."

Buddhism sustained him in his life of total frustration and desolation. He was convinced of the truth of Buddha's first principle, "All life is suffering". Afterwards, Ginsberg also developed interest in Buddhism through Kerouac. This made Allen Ginsberg to read Dr. D.T. Suzuki's Essays in Zen Buddhism. Suzuki was also responsible for generating interest in Kerouac for Zen Buddhism.

Kerouac had begun writing the Town and the City in 1942, working at it six years, writing mostly at night. The novel finally appeared in 1950 and was generally reviewed favourably.

Kerouac came into contact with Beat Generation when he became acquainted with Allen Ginsberg in 1944, when he lived with him at Columbia University. It was Ginsberg who stimulated the literary output of Kerouac.
But though this was fruitful in one way, it was baneful in another, because this initiated him into the world of drugs which affected his health. Though this filled him with visions which he greatly recorded in his novels, this created in him a sense of guilt for he always remembered his father's advice that he should not defame his family name.

The Town and the City anticipated the "rootless bohemian freedom" Kerouac was to explore in later novels. While explaining why he cherished old ways founded in the nineteenth century, relating to family harmony, continuity, and loyalty, he was chagrined by the "broken circuit of World War II." The Town and the City is a domestic tragedy, sympathetic to the view that accepts a character as tragic victim, "absurdly hopeful, pathetically faithful to an unreal ideal and unremitting, even stoical in pursuit of the ideal." The novel is about George Martin who is a father of five sons and three daughters. He is an independent, generous man who loves horse racing and owns a printing establishment but has no ambition of any sort. On becoming bankrupt he loses his business and horse and eventually moves to Brooklyn during the war after his children have left him. He now works in a huge printing plant in Manhattan. He is afflicted by the discovery of the anonymity of the modern
worker. His lung cancer is a naturalist's symbol of his inability of breathe under such conditions. In utter despair he sees his formerly thriving family disintegrate as his own once robust body succumbs to cancer.

Peter Martin, his son, is a football hero who resembles Kerouac himself. Later in the novel, George is sick and dying and Peter tends his father while his mother goes to work.

Francis, another son of George Martin, is contemplative, decadently intellectual, and totally withdrawn, suggests lonelier aspect of Kerouac's character. Francis is the first to leave his family, incapable of sharing love. He joins military services but cannot tolerate its discipline and feigning madness, is successful in getting discharged. After that he develops cynicism and tells Peter that God is dead and that "the principles of the diabolic night will ultimately devour man..." 86

The eldest son, Joe, shares none of Francis' intellectual pretensions and has more of Peter's heart without the capability to direct it. Joe is a truck driver who impulsively takes his truck while on a job to work on ranches. He is good-natured and easy going with a sense of reality that he cannot fulfil other expectations about him. He enlists in the army, spends
four brutal years in it and returns after the war to urge Peter to succour their dying father. He is shocked by the resentful changes that have taken place. Peter, Francis, Joe and George Martin, all seem, trapped in the same conspiracy of change caused by the war.

On the Road was completed in 1951 but appeared six years later, and in form and theme it totally broke the conventional pattern. The narrator in the novel is Sal Paradise. Dean Moriarty has an ability to be excited by life and earn living by working on the railroad, parking cars or recapping tyres. His untiring enthusiasm contradicted the pessimistic and gloomy view of the future, expressed by many of Kerouac's closest friends and by Carlo Marx and old Bull Lee in the novel. Dean seems maddened by the urge for ubiquitous existence, at any time, anywhere to love several women, to conduct several searches which lead him nowhere. Practically, every character that Sal meets in On the Road is either preparing to depart or just returning from somewhere or planning a journey and they all express a vast and restless dissatisfaction with their lives. In all this movement there is no definite centre—Dean makes no distinctions, offers no judgements, is removed beyond ordinary standards of measurement. At the same time, his careless impunity is the epitome of American waste.
He treats his mistresses like his cars, with an all-consuming speed.

*Visions of Cody* was written in 1951-52 in New York and San Francisco and is a sequel to *On the Road*. Kerouac composed inserts for *On the Road* to make his friends appreciate the book but these inserts grew uncontrollably and by the spring of 1952, the new sections were almost as long as the original. At some point in early 1952, Kerouac decided not to use the inserts to patch up his earlier work but to consider them a new book in and of themselves. He called this new work *Visions of Cody*.

While working on the book, Kerouac came to believe in what he called "automatic writing", meaning that he tried to turn the job of composing prose over to his subconscious. The book deals with Kerouac’s trips with Neal Cassady, in quest of sex, drugs and wild enjoyment. Aaron Latham writes about the book:

> The book may at first seem like a raft that has broken up – no order, no plan, everything afloat in the stream of Jack Kerouac’s consciousness. But if you can stand some disorder, you will find some of Kerouac’s very best writing in this book. It is funny. It is serious. It is eloquent. To read *On the Road* but not *Visions of Cody* is to take a nice sight-seeing tour but to forgo the spectacular rapids of Jack Kerouac’s wildest writing."

87
Vision of Cody is written with amazing inventiveness, stylistic freedom and originality. There is a marked similarity between Neal Cassady and Jack Kerouac and in describing Neal, Jack dramatized his own life. Both of them were born in Catholic families and Neal's ebullient enthusiasm and verve evoked respect in Kerouac for Neal. Visions of Cody is Kerouac's most imaginative book.

Doctor Sax was written during Kerouac's visit to Burroughs in Mexico City in 1952. The novel describes the Merrimack River in spate in 1936. It is a Gothic fairy tale, the myth of puberty of an impressionable boy who fantasizes the presence of a mysterious alchemist named Doctor Sax, an embodiment of a recurrent nightmare Kerouac had as a child, of a shrouded stranger, who represented death and who was partly a reflection of the mordant, brooding and restless presence of Burrough's himself whom Kerouac was observing closely. The figure of Doctor Sax is representation of death which is always behind one's shoulder.

Doctor Sax is concerned with Kerouac's childhood recollection and nightmare. The name Doctor Sax is derived from Kerouac's imaginary companion he had in his early adolescence. The shrouded stranger became the symbol of good and evil.
In October in the Railroad is based on the experience of Kerouac which he had had as a railwayman in 1952. In the same year he started writing Book of Dreams (1960) during his trip to North Carolina.

In early 1953 Kerouac wrote a novel Maggie Cassidy which was published in 1959, in New York. The novel is set in Lowell in 1939, and describes the unfulfilled early yearnings of a sixteen year old Jack Duluoz for his high school love, Maggie, a girl only one year his senior but far more mature and sexually aware. Kerouac has an adolescent affair with a girl called Merry Carney when he was in high school. In the novel Maggie Cassidy does not respond to Jack Duluoz's love for he is too naive to express it. Moreover, Jack's parents do not approve of early marriage.

Jack Duluoz sees Maggie first at a dance where she appears forlorn, sad and unpleasantly strange. Maggie has a curious affinity for disaster and often relates some tale of death or misfortune, once even in the middle of an embrace. Jack is always gloomy, unable to cope up with the situation that has arisen out of the cold response from Maggie. Towards the end of the novel, she shows less and less interest, intuitively aware of how her very basic needs would only interfere with
Dulouz's new goals. Maggie Cassady marks the transition from romantic swain to wordly question. The Subterraneans (1953) describes a passionate two-month relationship between Leo Perceiied and Mardou Fox ... Mardou Fox was a black girl whom Percipied met after coming back to New York in the late summer of 1953. She was a village "subterranean" who was hanging about, first with junkies, then with musicians and had just drifted into the crowd of people. It was a village crowd, interested in poetry, jazz and drugs. Ginsberg was interested in her but decided not to get involved with her.

Mardou was brought up in an orphanage and was looked after by her tyrannical uncle and aunt who often used to beat her. She was now out, off from her family and her background. After living with junkies she had begun to come apart, but when she went back to her family she was sent to a psychiatric hospital. She had come out of it a short time before Jack met her second time. She did not respond to Jack the first night they met. She had thought that he was a sad and lonely man.

Now drifting in the village, she stayed with whoever would have her, waiting quietly through all the endless parties until it was decided whom she would go home with, that night, smoking too much marijuana and being stoned
too much of the time.

Mardou was married at the age of fifteen but the marriage was broken. She had a kind of relation with Adam Moorad, a poet and friend of Leo and Julien Alexander, a beat and head of subterraneans.

Leo is the third man in her life and is moved by the story of her suffering. He is caught between his love and his being a writer. In the conflict his love overcomes him. But the days of passionate love-making come to an end when Leo keeps himself engaged in writing a novel. She feels neglected and begins to establish relations with Yuri, a hobo. Leo wants to make Mardou his wife but is frustrated. This has a parallel in real life. A Negro girl was in love with Kerouac's Beat friends Allen Ginsberg and Corso and Kerouac had felt frustrated. In the novel Leo Perceived is Jack Kerouac; Adam Moorad Allen Ginsberg; Frank Carmody William Burroughs; Yuti Gilgeric Gregory Corso; and Larry O' Hara Ferlinghetti.

The Subterraneans is a successful novel, John Tytell observes: "The signal triumph of the subterraneans is Kerouac's ability to capture Mardou's voice, her special dialectical situations and verbal inflections. It is an attribute of his ear and his spontaneous method." 88

We find similar theme in Tristessa, another love
story Kerouac wrote in a stone hovel, by the candlelight in Mexico City, in 1955. Tristessa was a junkie and a prostitute. She was more exotic than Mardou for she was an Azteca, an Indian girl with black, slick hair, hanging in two pigtails. She was preoccupied with her own sickness and the thought of death. El Indio, a dealer in morphine, was her friend. Her real name was Esperanza Villanueva and she had been an addict since the age of sixteen. Kerouac called her Tristessa, sadness, partly because of her melancholic voice, partly because he saw in the affliction of her drug use an illustration of the Buddhist first principle that all life is suffering and also because she was an object of an impossible love. She appealed to Kerouac because she was always sick and high and her life had a carefree quality, despite the fact that there was equalor and deprivation in her life.

The second half of Tristessa was written a year later after Kerouac had spent the summer on Desolation Peak as a fire watcher. He had declared his love for her in letters. Tristessa had virtually destroyed herself because of unregulated use of Seconals.

Tristessa explores the holiness of the ugly and disaffiliated. Terry in On the Road, Mardou in the Subterraneans and Tristessa "imply for Kerouac
a primitive sexuality while evoking a castration anxieties."89

Trestessa was catholic and did not accept love of Kerouac.

In 1954, Kerouac went to San Francisco and composed San Francisco Blues which shows traces of Buddhism. He also started writing some of the Dharma which was never published. Kerouac was much interested in Chinese Buddhism, philosophy and the Tao than asceticism and yoga of the Sanysin. Kerouac was busy in translating Buddhist sutras from French version for making money. Some of these translations were gathered under the title "Buddha Tells Us" which is not published. In 1955 Kerouac started writing Mexico City Blues which is a collection of Choruses, using Sanskrit terms of Buddhism, names of Buddhist teachers and the philosophy of Surangama Sutra and Lankavatara Sutra.

The Dharma Bums (1958) is a Buddhist novel in which Gary Snyder figures under the name of Japhy Ryder. At the end of the novel Ray Smith (Jack) goes to the mountain for meditation to understand Buddhism.

In 1956, Jack went to North Carolina and wrote visions of Gerard (1963). The novel depicts the death
of his brother Gerard who died at the age of nine and had held such a powerful influence on Jack that he could never forget him in all his life.

In the same year, Kerouac wrote *The Scripture of the Golden Eternity* which is a book of poems in which Kerouac praises God. He combines Catholicism with Buddhism.

In June 1956, Jack started on the road with Gary Snyder and reached Desolation Peak. His experiences on the Peak became the subject matter for his novel *Desolation Angels* which was completed in 1961.

*The Dharma Bums* was completed in 1959 in Florida, which was followed by *Lonesome Traveller* (1958–60) which is an autobiography of Kerouac, describing his life of travelling and is a collection of his travel sketches.

In 1960, Jack felt distressed and bored and he accepted invitation from Ferlinghetti to live in cabin at Bixby Canyon near Bug Sur. He recorded these experiences in the novel *Big Sur* (1961).

In 1965, Kerouac wrote *Satori in Paris*. In 1966 he got married with Stella Sampas. His mother was paralysed and Stella Sampas devoted herself to serve him and his ailing mother. Jack visited Lowell with Stella and wrote *Vanity of Dulouz* in 1967. He wanted
to write the legend of his life and this was to be the last novel, telling the story of his life from 1935 to 1946.

In 1969, Jack wrote Pic which was his last novel. It is the picture of an unhappy boy named Pictorial Review Jackson, a ten-year old black boy, living in North Carolina. He is an orphan and is looked after by his uncle and aunt but is ill-treated by Grandpa Jelky.

At school also he was ill-treated. Pic dreamed of love and freedom for his was the life of utter loneliness. He always desired to see the town which was at some distance from where he lived. He hoped to get better treatment in the town. He is finally happy when his brother Slim arrives and takes him away to New York.

In 1969, Kerouac suffered from hernia and his mother lay in paralytic condition. By this time, Kerouac had much sobered down and tempered and he died that year. He was buried in his home town Lowell.

"To his generation Jack Kerouac became a romantic hero, an archetypal rebel, the symbol of their own vanities, the symbol of their own romantic legend."
VI

Buddhist consciousness first becomes evident when we come to the first Noble Truth that Buddha expounds and which is a starting point of the Buddhist Philosophy. Buddha enumerates three causes, i.e. tanha or craving, hatred and ignorance, responsible for dukkha or suffering in human life. We live, Buddha says, in a state of consciousness wherein tanha plays a vital role, K.D. Sethna observes:

Tanha, psychologically, is thirst with attachment to a transitory object of thirst, making that object seem desirable. Tanha is thirst in which the transitory object acquires "glamour" and produces in us subjection to its spell. In the widest connotation, tanha is the inner conscious support we eagerly give to life and its changes and its tendency towards rebirth, believing that life will make us feel happy and fulfilled. Life really fails to give us fulfilment. Remove the clinging beglamoured consciousness, replace it by another which stands apart from temporary things, seek no sukha through them, take no pleasure in them and to escape the passing of pleasure and the recurrence of dukkha. Both, sukha and dukkha arising from transiences will stop affecting our consciousness and an ever satisfying permanent will gradually be experienced.

The Buddha or Enlightened Man, represents a state, an attainment, a mode or being and consciousness. When
the real man becomes the ideal man, when the unenlightened man is transformed into the Enlightened man, he enters into a spiritual life which is Higher Evolution. The change that takes place in this is purely mental, it is consciousness that develops the Higher Evolution, corresponds to the whole process, the whole course of development which transforms the unenlightened man into an Enlightened being. This is purely a psychological and spiritual process, which may, eventually, become entirely dissociated from the physical body.

There are four levels of consciousness. First is sense consciousness which is associated with objects experienced through physical senses. This is simple consciousness or animal consciousness. Second, there is self-consciousness. It is the self-consciousness in the sense of awareness of being aware, knowing that we know. This is also called reflexive consciousness because it bends back upon itself, knows itself, experiences itself, is aware of itself. This is really a human consciousness. Third, there is what is called transcendental consciousness. It means consciousness of ultimate reality experienced as an object "out there". Fourth, there is absolute consciousness in which the subject-object relation is entirely dissolved and in
which there is a full realization of ultimate reality, as transcending altogether the subject-object duality.

Traditional Buddhism speaks in terms of four grades, or four levels of consciousness, each one higher than the one preceding. First of all there is consciousness associated with the plane, or 'world', of sensuous experience; secondly there is consciousness associated with the plane, or 'world', of mental and spiritual form, the plane or world of 'archetypes'. Then there is consciousness associated with the formless plane or 'world' and finally, consciousness associated with the Transcendental Path, that is the path leading directly to Nirvana, Enlightenment or Buddhahood, as well as with Nirvana, Enlightenment, or Buddhahood itself.

I have tried to locate the states of consciousness in the novels of Jack Kerouac and examined them, in their various aspects. I have limited the scope of my study to four novels: Visions of Gerard, Tristessa, The Dharma Bums and Desolation Angels. In these novels Buddhist consciousness pre-eminently expresses itself through Buddhist doctrines such as suffering, Four Noble Truths, Trikaya, Tathagata, Bodhisattvahood, Womb of Tathagatha, Enlightenment, void etc.

Kerouac follows Mahayana Buddhism and A Buddhist Bible edited by Dwight Goddard serves him as a source book.