

CHAPTER-1

Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Allen Ginsberg's poem "Howl" (1956) is a complex and exciting poem about the divine in the common world. The minor themes of "Howl" are drugs and sexuality work together to illuminate the major theme of spirituality. The poem reveals through a multitude of sharp images and phrases that everything from drug use to homosexuality to mental illness is holy, even in a world of atom bombs and materialistic America, which Ginsberg considers not being holy and he refers to as Moloch. In the footnote of "Howl" Ginsberg writes: The world is holy!, The soul is holy!, The skin is holy! ... Everything is holy!, Everybody is holy!, Everywhere is holy! ... (2-3). Sexuality is a theme that runs throughout the entire poem. It is not an uneasy sexuality of the 1950's culture but a liberated one. And this sexual imagery that mostly takes place in the first part of the poem, constantly refers to spirituality and the divine.

"Howl" is one of the highly proclaimed poems in literary world. "Howl" became the milestone of Beat Generation. Wayne Franklin and Ronald Gottesman write in *The Northon Anthology American Literature* about "Howl":

Howl (1956) combined apocalyptic criticism of the dull prosperous Eisenhower Years with exuberant celebration of an emerging counter culture. It was the best known and most widely circulated book of poems of its time, and with its appearance Ginsberg became the part of history of publicity as well as the history of poetry (2996).

In "Howl" Ginsberg perceives himself as art of a "generation," victims sharing a collective historical fate as an ironic mockery of one of the dominant values of 1950's America. The language which Ginsberg's use in "Howl" seems sexualizes the concept of 'mind,' making it more bodily and instinctive, while simultaneously spiritualizing the body,

making its hunger and nakedness into emblems of religious yearning. M.H Abrams writes about “Howl” in *Glossary of Literature Terms*:

Howl (1956) is a central Beat achievement in its breathless, chanted celebration of the down-and-out and the subculture of drug addicts, social misfits, and compulsive wanderers, as well as its representation of the derangement of the intellect and the sense effected by a combination of sexual abandon, drugged addicts, social misfits, and compulsive wanderers, as well as in its representation of the derangement of the intellect and the senses effected by a combination of sexual abandon, drugged hallucinations, and religious ecstasies (21).

The essential aspect of Ginsberg's poetry, and Beat writing as a whole, is a genuine search for spiritual enlightenment outside of the traditional strictures of religious dogma.

After 1945, a shift appeared in traditional form, ideas, history. It brought continuity to human life in the contemporary literary imagination throughout many parts of the world, including the United States. *Merriam Webster's Encyclopedia of Literature* writes about Ginsberg's “Howl”:

A denunciation of the weakness and failing of American society, *Howl* is a combination lamentation, jeremiad, and vision. The poem opens with a run-on sentence that describes the despair and frustration of American youths, beginning “I saw best mind...” (564).

Events since World War II have produced a sense of history as discontinuous: each act, emotion, and moment is seen as unique. Style and form now seem provisional, makeshift, and reflexive of the process of composition and the writer's self awareness.

It is not hard to find historical causes for this disassociated sensibility in the United States. World War II itself, the rise of anonymity and consumerism in a mass urban society, the protest movements of the 1960s, the decade long Vietnam conflict, the Cold War,

environmental threats-the catalog of shocks to American culture is long and varied. The change that most transformed American society, however, has been the rise of the mass media and mass culture. Americans seeing alternatives, poetry seems more relevant than before: It offers people a way to express subjective life and articulate the impact of technology and mass society on the individual. In the reflection of this American society Ginsberg writes "Howl," which designates the materialistic society on the surface but spiritual illumination in depth.

1.2. Ginsberg's Biography

Allen Ginsberg was born on June 3, 1926, in Newark, New Jersey, the younger son of Louis Ginsberg, and Naomi Levy Ginsberg. In the winter of 1941 Ginsberg started his study in high school. His mother was suffering from mental illness. Witnessing his mother's mental illness had a shocking effect on Ginsberg, who wrote poetry about her unstable condition for the rest of his life.

Graduating from Newark's East Side High School in 1943, Ginsberg later recalled that his most memorable school day was the afternoon his English teacher Frances Durbin read aloud from Walt Whitman's *Song of Myself* in a voice, it impresses him a lot.

Attending the college of Columbia University on a scholarship, Ginsberg considered his favorite course the required freshman great books seminar taught by Lionel Trilling.

Encyclopedia of Literature Merriam Webster writes about Ginsberg:

Ginsberg studied at Columbia university, where he became close friends with Jack Kerouac and William Burroughs, who were later to be numbered among the beats. *Howl*, his first published book, laments what Ginsberg believed to have been the destruction by insanity of the "Best mind of [his] generation." *Empty mirror*, a collection of earlier poems, appeared in 1961 along with *Kiddish* and other poems, followed by *REALITY SANDWICHES* in 1963" (464).

Later Ginsberg also cited the renowned literary critics and biographers Mark Van Doren and Raymond Weaver as influential professors at Columbia. But Ginsberg's friends at Columbia were an even greater influence than his professors on his decision to become a poet. As a freshman he met undergraduate Lucien Carr, who introduced him to William S. Burroughs and Jack Kerouac, part of a diverse circle of friends that grew to include the Times Square heroin addict Herbert Huncke, the young novelist John Clellon Holmes, and a handsome young drifter and car thief from Denver named Neal Cassady, with whom Ginsberg fell in love. Kerouac described the intense encounter between Ginsberg and Cassady in the opening chapter of his novel *On the Road* (1957). Later, these friends became the nucleus of a group that named themselves the "Beat Generation" writers.

In the summer of 1948, in his senior year at Columbia, Ginsberg had dedicated himself to becoming a poet after hearing in a vision the voice of William Blake reciting the poem *Ah Sunflower*. Experimenting with drugs like marijuana and nitrous oxide to induce further visions, or what Ginsberg later described as "an exalted state of mind," he felt that the poet's duty was to bring a visionary consciousness of reality to his readers.

In June 1949 Ginsberg was arrested as an accessory to crimes carried out by Huncke and his friends, who had stored stolen goods in Ginsberg's apartment. As an alternative to a jail sentence, Ginsberg's professors Van Doren and Trilling arranged with the Columbia dean for a plea of psychological disability, on condition that Ginsberg was admitted to the Columbia Presbyterian Psychiatric Institute. Spending eight months in the mental institution, Ginsberg became close friends with the young writer Carl Solomon, who was treated there for depression with insulin shock.

In December 1953 Ginsberg left New York City on a trip to Mexico to explore Indian ruins. In this sense Bill Morgan and Nancy Peters in *Howl on Trial: The Battle for Free Expression* about his habit of music, drug, sexuality:

...a long jazz poem titled "Mexico City Blues" that Kerouac had recently written in Mexico City, Ginsberg found the courage to begin to type what he called his most personal "imaginative sympathies" in the long poem "*Howl* for Carl Solomon," Allen finally accepted his homosexuality and stopped trying to become 'straight' (31).

In October 1955 Ginsberg read the first part of his new poem in public for the first time to tumultuous applause at the Six Gallery reading in San Francisco with the local poets Kenneth Rexroth, Gary Snyder, Michael McClure, Philip Whalen, and Philip LaMantia. Journalists were quick to herald the reading as a landmark event in American poetry, the birth of what they labeled the San Francisco Poetry Renaissance. Merriam Webster Dictionary of American Writers writes about "Howl":

The epic poem that was his first published book, laments what Ginsberg saw at the destruction by insanity of the "best mind of my generation" and became the most famous poem to emerge from the Beat Movement in *Howl* and later works, which show the influence of Walt Whitman, William Black and Ezra Pound, he is also celebrated psychotropic drugs, foot loose wondering and homosexuality (162).

During the furor of the trial, Ginsberg left California and settled in Paris with Orlovsky, who was to remain his companion for the next forty years. Living on Ginsberg's royalties from "Howl" and Orlovsky's disability checks as a Korean War veteran, they traveled to Tangier to stay with Burroughs and help him assemble the manuscript later published as his novel *Naked Lunch* (1959). In 1958 Ginsberg returned to New York City, still troubled by his mother's death in the mental hospital two years before, haunted by the thought that he had never properly said goodbye to her. Using various drugs to explore his painful memories of their life together and confront his complex feelings about his mother, Ginsberg wrote his greatest poem, *Kaddish for Naomi Ginsberg*, modeling his elegy on the

traditional Jewish memorial service for the dead.

In 1968 Ginsberg received wide coverage on television during the Democratic National Convention when he and the members of the National Mobilization Committee who were against U.S. participation in the war in Vietnam confronted the police in Chicago's Grant Park. The poet stayed on an impromptu stage and chanted "Om" in an attempt to calm the crowds being brutally attacked by tear gas and Billy clubs. Ginsberg's courage, his humanitarian political views and support of homosexuality, his engagement in Eastern meditation practices, and his charismatic personality made him one of the favorite spokesmen chosen by a younger generation of radicalized Americans known as "hippies" during the end of this turbulent decade.

In 1971 Ginsberg met Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, who became his meditation teacher at the Naropa Institute, a Buddhist college in Boulder, Colorado. Three years later, Ginsberg, assisted by the young poet Anne Waldman, founded a creative writing program called the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics at Naropa. Ginsberg taught summer poetry workshops there and lectured during the academic year at Brooklyn College as a tenured distinguished professor until the end of his life. Ginsberg established his own identity in Beat Generation. Richard Ruland and Malcolm Bradbury write about Ginsberg in *From Puritanism to Postmodernism*:

Ginsberg's literary roots run steadfastly in Williams's American grain, so much so that his high visibility and widespread popularity among the young seem to measure the decline of Eliot's authority and the waning of Europe's influence on postwar American writing (397).

In his remaining years, publishing steadily and traveling tirelessly despite increasing health problems with diabetes and the aftereffects of a stroke, Ginsberg gave readings in Russia, China, Europe, and the South Pacific. Up to end of his life he became very popular, especially with young, as Peter B. High writes in *An Outline of American Literature*:

Ginsberg is often called a modern Whitman, because he uses free-form poetry to praise the free life-style. His poetry almost always has a message: defending drug-taking and homosexuality or attacking American society and politics. He is still personally popular among American young people today, but not as popular as he was in the fifties and sixties. He has always been interested in Zen Buddhism. He uses the Zen idea of “spontaneity” (unplanned action) in his poetry (191-192).

He was the archetypal Beat Generation writer to countless poetry audiences and to the general public. Unlike Kerouac, who died in 1969, Ginsberg remained a radical poet, the embodiment of the ideals of personal freedom, nonconformity, and the search for enlightenment.

1.3. Beat Generation and Ginsberg's “Howl”

Beat Generation, group of American writers of the 1950s whose writing expressed profound dissatisfaction with contemporary American society and endorsed an alternative set of values. The term sometimes is used to refer to those who embraced the ideas of these writers. The Beat Generation's best-known figures were writers Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac, who met as students at Columbia University in the 1940s, and San Francisco-based poet and publisher Lawrence Ferlinghetti. Ferlinghetti's City Lights Bookstore, in the North Beach section of San Francisco, became a center of Beat culture and remained an enduring symbol of alternative literature into the 1990s. Another center of Beat activity was New York City's East Village, where Ginsberg made his home. Carl Rollyson writes in *Encyclopedia of American Literature* about “The Beats”:

The Beats were not so much social rebels in 1960s sense as they were disaffected and disaffiliated. They were in a sense, loners who formed their own club. They were anarchists and radical individualists who found company and simulation in literature and music. They were “hoppers” as Ginsberg call

them in “Howl.” They were literary “beat” in the sense of having been worn out by conventional society (21).

The term Beat Generation was first used by Kerouac in the late 1940s. The word beat had various connotations for the writers, including despair over the beaten state of the individual in mass society and belief in the beatitude, or blessedness, of the natural world and in the restorative powers of the beat of jazz music and poetry. Beat writing generally called for a renunciation of material goods and acquisitiveness in favor of a rediscovery of the erotic, artistic, and spiritual self through the use of drugs, casual sex, music, and the mysticism of Zen Buddhism. The term beatnik was coined in the late 1950s to refer, often disparagingly, to people who embraced the ideas and attitudes of the Beat writers. Eric Mottram writes on this issue in *The Penguin Companion to Literature*:

[T]he Beats were a criticism of American complacency under the Ike-Nixon regime, an expression of new forms of prose, and poetry and an exploration of consciousness, which joined the dissent of existing Bohemias [...] to produce a distinct style of literature and living, based on disaffiliation, poverty, anarchic individualism and communal living. A relaxation of 'square' (puritan, middle-class, respectable) attitudes towards sex, drugs, religion and art became the opposing uniformity of 'beat' (28).

Ginsberg's “Howl” (1956) is a central Beat achievement in its breathless, chanted celebration of the down and out and the subculture of drug addicts, social misfits, and compulsive wanderers, as well as in its representation of the derangement of the intellect and the senses effected by a combination of sexual abandon drugged hallucinations, and religious ecstasies. *Merriam Webster Encyclopedia of Literature* states:

“The poem was praised for an incantatory rhythms and saw emotion; critics noted the influences of Ginsberg’s mentor William Carlos Williams, Walt Whitman, and William S. Burroughs. *Howl* also was unabashed celebration and

critique of the masculine., homosexual coupling landed its publisher, Lawrence Ferlighetti, in court on charges of distributing obscene material but he was acquitted in 1957 in a landmark decision” (564).

The publishing establishment began to take a greater interest in the Beat writers with the publication of “Howl” in 1956. The trial which eventually cleared City Lights of obscenity charges was a concrete sign that significant cultural changes were underway: the Beat Generation had entered a new stage.

The impact of the Beats would certainly not have been as universal or influential if not for the writing of one poem; “Howl” by Allen Ginsberg:

I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving
hysterical naked,
dragging themselves through the negro streets at dawn looking for an angry
fix,
angel headed hipsters burning for the ancient heavenly connection to the
starry dynamo in the machinery of night (1-3)

These lines, perhaps the most well known in 20th century poetry, serve as a thematic statement for a poem that offers a new way of thinking, a sense of hope of escape from the "Molochs" of society. The story of the poem's history serves well as an account of the birth of the Beat Generation.

However, a literary work does not become a modern classic by way of publicity alone. What is it, then, that propels “Howl” past the bounds of ordinary poetry and into the realm of landmark literature. What is it that has caused this poem to become the handbook of an entire generation? This question is best explored beginning with Ginsberg's own views of his work. Ginsberg considered the writing of “Howl” to be a new phase in his poetic development, best characterized by total creative freedom. This freedom consists mainly of an escape from "fear" to total openness and honesty. In order to read “Howl” properly, one

must avoid the impulse to search for a logical or rational connection of ideas. Analysis or explanation of the poem would seem to be a competition with the poem's own message, which is literally a violent "Howl" of human anguish and other spontaneous feelings.

This examination of "Howl's" history, structure, and themes brings to light the poem's ultimate importance to the history of American literature and society. The Beat Generation of writers offered the world a new attitude. They brought to society a consciousness of a life worth living. They offered a method of escape from the stultifying, unimaginative world we live in through the exploration of one's intellect. Allen Ginsberg's "Howl" does all of these things and more in an unforgettable, inspirational way. The poem points the way toward a new and better existence, chronicling the pilgrimage of the "mad generation" toward a reality that is timeless. "Howl" broke away not only from poetic literary traditions, but also from the constraints of the "silent generation."

1.4. Beat Writers and Works

Beat as a movement began after World War II, a reaction by some against society's conformism and mindless acceptance of new materialistic roles. After the war was over, consumer goods became paramount to the American Way and other, simpler things no longer mattered as much. Beat was a group of American writers referred to as the Beat writers, communicated their profound disaffection with contemporary society through their unconventional writings and lifestyle. Notable writers associated with the group included novelists Jack Kerouac and William S. Burroughs and poets Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Allen Ginsberg. *Merriam Webster's Encyclopedia of Literature* writes about Beat works:

... centered in the bohemian activists' communities of San Francisco's North Beach southern California's Venice west, and New York City's Greenwich village its adherents, self-styled as "beat" (originally meaning "weary" but later also collecting a musical scene, a 'beatific' spirituality and other meanings.) and derisively called "beatniks" expressed their alienation from

conventional, or “square,” society by adopting an almost uniform style of seedy dress “cool,” ditched iconic – manners and “hip” vocabulary borrowed by Jazz musicians” (564).

Their writing was characterized by a raw, improvisational quality as they liberated writing from formal concerns and plot, often drawing on personal experience. Perhaps the best-known Beat novel is Kerouac’s semiautobiographical *On the Road* (1957), which celebrates direct sensory experience and freedom from everyday responsibilities. In Glossary of Literature Terms, the “Beat Writers” regarded as:

Beat writers identifies a loose-knit group of poets and novelists, writing in the second half of the 1950s and early 1960s, who shared a set of social attitudes—antiestablishment, antipolitical, anti-intellectual, opposed to the prevailing cultural, literary, and moral values, and in favor of unfettered self-realization and self-expression. The Beat writers often performed in coffee houses and other public places, to the accompaniment of drums or jazz music (Abraham 21).

The first book generally characterized as a Beat Generation work was *Go* (1952), a novel by John Clellon Holmes about a group of young, disenchanted writers in New York City who closely resembled the Beats. The first discussion of the Beat Generation in a national forum was an article entitled *This is the Beat Generation*, also written by Holmes, which was featured in the Sunday magazine section of the New York Times in November 1952. But it was not until 1956, when the publication of Ginsberg’s epic poem “Howl” provoked an obscenity trial, that the Beat Generation achieved broad national recognition.

A poem in three sections, “Howl” is written in free verse, unrhymed lines with no fixed meter. Verging at times on stream of consciousness, the poem appears to follow Ginsberg’s unedited train of thought, its sequence dictated by free association rather than logic

Perhaps the best-known Beat novel is Kerouac's semiautobiographical *On the Road* (1957). The book celebrates direct sensory experience, freedom from conventional responsibilities, and the emotional intensity of a life of hitchhiking, casual sex, and recreational drug use. At the novel's end, however, the narrator retreats from these excesses, hoping to find the stability necessary for writing. The road stood for an emotional journey as well as for the actual roads the writer traveled. His other important Beat works include the novel *The Dharma Bums* (1958) and the *collection of poetry Mexico City Blues* (1959).

Ferlinghetti, as founder of City Lights Books, an independent press in San Francisco, was responsible for the publication of much Beat poetry, including "Howl," in his Pocket Poets Series. The best-known collection of Ferlinghetti's own poetry, *A Coney Island of the Mind* (1958), is characterized by frank language, vivid imagery, and humor. Other writers associated with the Beat Generation include William S. Burroughs, Neal Cassady, Gregory Corso, Diana DiPrima, and Paul Bowles.

BBC World Service writes in its report in 17-Jan-08 entitle *Beat Beliefs and Action*, to define the 'Beat Generation' in its website bbc.co.uk as:

'The Beat Generation advocated the rediscovery of the self, through a variety of ways. Casual sex, drugs, Zen Buddhism, and listening to music were obviously the most popular, and they were fitting trappings for those involved in the 'rucksack revolution' ("Beat Beliefs and Action").

This report indicates that the 'beat' was dedicated on the path of rediscovery; they were follower of Zen Buddhism; they believe popularity; they walked with music, etc.

1.5. Review of the Literature

Ginsberg's "Howl" became one of the most widely read poems of the second half of the twentieth century. Hundreds of editions of his poems have been published, including translations in all major languages. Scholars have written thousands of thesis and articles about his poems. He is one of the widely quoted poets in history, and his poems have

probably been read more times than those of any other poets of 50s and 60s. Perhaps “Howl” would achieve a certain landmark status as a touchstone of the Beat movement's poetic expression. Ginsberg is both tragic and dynamic, a lyrical genius voice since Whitman.

In the introduction of *Howl and Other Poems* William Carlos Williams evaluates the “Howl” as a horrifying experience. Beyond the physical body, poet analysis “Howl” from the depth relating spirit. William Carlos Williams sees through and all around the horrors he partakes of in the very intimate details of his poem. He avoids nothing but experiences it to the hilt Poet writes:

It is the poet, Allen Ginsberg, who has gone, in his own body, through the horrifying experiences described from life in these pages. The wonder of the thing is not that he has survived but that he, from the very depths, has found a fellow whom he can love, a love he celebrates without looking aside in these poems. Say what you will, he proves to us, in spite of the most debasing experiences that life can offer a man, the spirit of love survives to ennoble our lives if we have the wit and the courage and the faith--and the art! to persist (W C. Williams, Introduction).

In *Scratching the Beat Surface*, Michael expresses the feeling of wonder of cheering wonder. For him it is the deepest level of joy, self-influential type of freedom, a joy for spiritual illumination. At the same time he takes the references of P.B. Shelly and bohemian. He states:

We wanted voice and we wanted vision. . . . Ginsberg read on to the end of the poem, which left us standing in wonder, or cheering and wondering, but knowing at the deepest level that a barrier had been broken, that a human voice and body had been hurled against the harsh wall of America and its supporting armies and navies and academies and institutions and ownership systems and power-support bases....so later I told Allen that *Howl* was like

Queen Mab--Shelley's first long poem. *Howl* was Allen's metamorphosis from quiet, brilliant, burning bohemian scholar trapped by his flames and repressions to epic vocal bard. Shelley had made the same transformation (63).

American poet Eberhart, Richard takes this poem as a powerful work. He sees dynamic meaning here. Taking the reference of poet Whitman, he compares Ginsberg's poem with Whitman's poem. He sees "Howl" a poem about anti-war, and against the materialistic society and includes in *West Coast Rhythms. New York Times Book Review*:

It is a *Howl* against everything in our mechanistic civilization which kills the spirit, assuming that the louder you shout the more likely you are to be heard. It lays bare the nerves of suffering and spiritual struggle. Its positive force and energy come from a redemptive quality of love, although it destructively catalogues evils of our time from physical deprivation to madness (38).

Giving great respect and taking the reference of world canonic poets Microsoft Encarta writes that the volume deals with such themes as his acceptance of his homosexuality, his literary friendships, his extensive travels, and his rejection of American materialism. Microsoft Encarta gives great respect to Ginsberg. It compares Ginsberg with canonic poet William Black, Walt Whitman, William Carlos William. Encarta explains "Howl" as an honesty subject and explicit too. Microsoft Encarta, Student Premium 2008 DVD writes:

"*Howl*" uses vivid images and long, overflowing lines to illuminate Ginsberg's thoughts. *Howl* and Ginsberg's subsequent poetry show the influence of English poet William Blake (who Ginsberg claimed once spoke to him in a vision) and American poets Walt Whitman and William Carlos Williams. Ginsberg's poetry is informal, discursive, and often repetitive. Its

immediacy, honesty, and explicit sexual subject matter frequently give it an improvised quality” (“Allen Ginsberg”).

“Howl” is taken as a poem of comparable to Bible. Ginsberg takes many references from holy book like Bible and words from the Eastern religion such as Hinduism, Buddhism, so on. In the sense Berry Miles states in *Ginsberg: A Biography*:

‘Footnote to Howl’ of course is Biblical in reference. The reference is to the Benedictine, which says over and over again. ‘Blessed is he fire, Blessed is the light, Blessed are the trees, and Blessed is this and Blessed is that’, and he is saying ‘Everything that is human is holy to me and, that the possibility of salvation in this terrible situation which he reveals is through the love and through the love of everything holy in man’ (12).

Linking above references “Howl” can be summarized as a poem having anti-war message and its affirmation of the heart. It incorporates the influences such as Jazz, art, literature, philosophy, and religion. The beats writers create a new and spiritual vision of modern life. They want to change the way and entire generation of people. They want to give the message of alive and well. Ginsberg's “Howl” incarnates the gaps between the heaven and street, literal and visionary, materialism to spiritualism.

CHAPTER – 2

Religious Perspective on Spiritualism in Relation to “Howl”

2.1. Introduction to Spiritualism

Spiritualism is a way of life. It combines philosophy, science and religion. It covers a very wide field and therefore, it is a little difficult to say within few lines in the base of general study. Here is an illustration about modern spiritualism; not merely religious. The spiritual website, "spiritual.org.ug" cites the journalist Craig Hamilton-Parker report on "Psyche News". In his simple language the Jesus expression of seven principle, and says,

"Spiritualists mainly agree on seven principles. They are:

- i) The fatherhood of God
- ii) The brotherhood of man
- iii) The communion of spirits and the ministry of angels.
- iv) The continuous existence of the human soul.
- v) Personal responsibility.
- vi) Compensation and,
- vii) Retribution hereafter for all good and evil deeds done on earth (4 Dec 1993).

The primary object of Spiritualism today is to prove the survival of human personality after death. Death is the doorway to a new and wider life. From the day of our birth we each have two bodies, the material or earthly body, which can be seen, and the spiritual body, which is unseen during life but is a counterpart of our earthly body. These two bodies are linked by a cord. In similar fashion, before birth a baby is joined to its mother by a cord. When it is born the cord must be cut.

When we die, the cord linking our two bodies is severed. The material body returns to the earth whence it came, and the spiritual body becomes the vehicle of our spirit. We are spirit here and now - we do not have to wait until death to become spirit. Death, as a rule

seems like sleep - there is no pain. When we awake, conditions seem much the same to us as before we 'died'. We need have no fear of death. We have fitted ourselves for the result which is automatic, a better, happier life where we are reunited with our loved ones and friends.

Encyclopedia of Britannica writes:

Spiritualism embraces a vast array of highly diversified philosophical views. Most patently, it applies to any philosophy accepting the notion of an infinite, personal God, the immortality of the soul, or the immateriality of the intellect and will ("Spiritualism").

Spirituality is taken as inner life. The inner life show us truth and light, it will guide us give us the message of illumination and transformation. In this sense Sri Chinmoy writes few poetic lines in his essay *Spirituality*:

The inner joy is self-centered.

It does not depend on outer circumstances.

A river is flowing in and through you

Carrying the message of joy.

This divine joy is the sole purpose of life (15).

Acts of service that we have performed will naturally increase our spiritual status. Sins of omission or commission will just as naturally retard it. There is, however, no hell in which its inhabitants are condemned for eternity. Once self-realization dawns and the soul is ready to advance, there are enlightened spiritual beings who will show the way to progress. The practical application of Spiritualism is the supreme necessity for all of us to lead the best kind of life we can on earth; to practice qualities of compassion and kindness, and to give service wherever we can. Gerhard (Gerry) von Treskow writes in titled, "What is Spiritualism?" in *Spiritualism* magazine:

Heaven and hell are really states of mind, not geographical locations. Even here we can live in heaven or in hell, the choice is ours. The world we inhabit after death is not far away up in the sky. It is round and about us, interpenetrating the world in which we now live. Those we have "loved and lost awhile" are not in some far-off, inaccessible place, seated on pink clouds at the right hand of God and playing harps. Very often, they are close by our side, striving to help and guide us, and loving us just as they did before passing (12).

The evidence reveals that love, like life, is stronger than death. It is love that proves to be the compelling force, striving to break down the barriers, which man in his ignorance has created, between this world and what is called the next, in order to achieve spirit communication. Often there is grief on both sides of the veil. There are the tears shed over loved ones who have died and the grief they experience when they try to reach us but fail to make their presence known. But we see problem as Abraham Cawley says in his essay *Of Solitude*:

It is very fantastical and controversial in human nature that man should love themselves above all the rest of the world, yet never endure to be with themselves. When they are in love with a mistress, all other persons are importunate and burdensome to them (30).

There are many spheres of existence that are invisible to us because they function in a different manner from earth. Millions of vibrations of sight fail to be registered because they are beyond the scope of our eyes. Microphones and radio receivers enable us to hear what is normally beyond the range of our ears. The telescope and television will bring into focus what is beyond our vision. The inhabitants of the spirit world are very real even though we cannot see or hear them.

There are, however, highly sensitive individuals who have developed their innate natural psychic faculties with the result that they can tune in to the spirit world and its denizens. These human television and radio sets are mediums. They become the agents through whom spirit communication is achieved. Craig Hamilton-Parker, writes in titled “Real Spiritualism” in *Spiritualism* magazine:

God is not a person but the creative universal spirit. Wherever there is life there is spirit, and wherever there is spirit there is life. We exist because a spark of divinity is within each one of us. This is a divine relationship in which God is our father and we are all His children. We can, by our lives, fan the spark into a flame so that a greater expression of divinity is made known through us. The result will be to sustain, uplift and help us in our spiritual development. And we have the free will to reject and ignore the spark of divinity. The result is that we fail to make the progress we should and deny ourselves the beauty that life has to offer (17).

The ‘Philosophy of Yoga’ takes God a little different way. S. P. Chaube and A. Chaube mention in *Foundation of Education*, God as:

Ishwor is full of Gyan (knowledge), Ichcha (desire) and power of activity. None is as powerful as Ishwor. Ishwor has always been Ishwor and will remain Ishwor. He is full of excellences. He knows everything. He is always free (Mukth) (164).

We regard Jesus as an exemplar, not a saviour. Man has no saviour but himself. We are each personally responsible for our sins and must atone for them here or hereafter. It is far more moral to acknowledge our sins and try to make amends than to try to place them on the shoulders of another. We believe that Jesus was divine, but only in the sense that we are all divine. There is a difference of degree but not of kind, Parker further says:

Bible states, that Jesus developed his psychic faculties and was a supreme master of spiritual law. Moreover he was in close touch with the spirit world and demonstrated his survival after his death. His teaching of brotherhood, love, humility and service is the basis of Spiritualism as we know it today (21).

What makes Spiritualism unique is the evidence of survival after death that is obtainable through medium-ship. Whereas most religions preach an after-life as a hope, faith or belief, we maintain that any reasonable person can prove it for himself. Mostly we do want business about achieving God, J. Krinshamurti says in his book *The First and Last Freedom about God*:

You want to know God because you have lost of the song of your hearts and you pursue the singer and ask him whether he can teach you how to sing. He can teach you the technique but the technique will not lead you to creation... you cannot love if your object is merely to achieve a result. There is no such thing as an ideal, because that is merely an achievement, it is reality, now, not tomorrow (243).

When we describe the word ‘spiritualism’ then it automatically relates the meaning with various religions. Every religion talks about spiritualism. How the religions address the meaning of the spiritualism? A little effort has been done in the following paragraph.

2.2. Spiritualism in “Howl” in Relation to Hinduism

Hinduism is a religious tradition of Indian origin, comprising the beliefs and practices of Hindus. The word Hindu is derived from the river Sindhu, or Indus. Hindu was primarily a geographical term that referred to India or to a region of India (near the Sindhu) as long ago as the 6th century B.C. The word Hinduism is an English word of more recent origin.

Hinduism entered the English language in the early 19th century to describe the beliefs and

practices of those residents of India who had not converted to Islam or Christianity and did not practice Judaism.

The Hindu tradition encourages Hindus to seek spiritual and moral truth wherever it might be found, while acknowledging that no creed can contain such truth in its fullness and that each individual must realize this truth through his or her own systematic effort. Our experience, our reason, and our dialogue with others—especially with enlightened individuals—provide various means of testing our understanding of spiritual and moral truth. And Hindu scripture, based on the insights of Hindu sages and seers, serves primarily as a guidebook. But ultimately truth comes to us through direct consciousness of the divine or the ultimate reality. In other religions this ultimate reality is known as god. Hindus refer to it by many names, but the most common name is Brahman. God is taken as supreme. Sir Chinmoy writes in his essay *God the Supreme*:

Man's eternal question is:

Who is God?

God's immediate answer is:

“My child, who else is God,

If not you?” (19)

Hinduism takes a comprehensive view of our human condition and has classified all the things we seek in the world and beyond into four broad categories: k ma, artha, dharma, and moksha. K ma includes the pleasure of the senses, both aesthetic (refined artistic) pleasures and sensual and sexual pleasure. Artha includes the pursuit of material well-being, wealth, and power. Dharma includes our striving for righteousness and virtue. Moksha describes our desire for liberation from the chain of lives.

The first three goals pertain to the world we know, whereas moksha involves freedom from the world and from desires for k ma, artha, and dharma. Attaining moksha is an extraordinary goal, which only some people specifically seek. In preparing for it, the prior

pursuit of dharma can be a great help. Dharma, in the sense of duty or desire to do right, occupies a central role in regulating artha and k ma and promoting moksha. On account of dharma's centrality, the goals of human life are often listed in the following order: dharma, artha, k ma and moksha.

Hindu philosophy gives great emphasis to spiritualism. This philosophy describes both scientifically and religiously. So far, we talk about scientifically, first we have mind; it rushes everywhere, then we have knowledge. Knowledge indicates to operate the things. It is through training and learning. Then we have wisdom, it is the ability to find out the use of knowledge is good or not according to time, context, condition and situation. Then we have spiritualism. It sees all things holy, equal, no difference in human being and other. Not only human being to all living beings in the cosmic. Sri Chimnoy says in *The Spiritual life*:

God is only the truth here on earth and there in Heave. For the aspirant, God comes first. But that does not mean that he neglects or negates the world. No, far from it! He loves God. He loves Humanity. He loves God because God is all Love. He loves humanity because inside humanity is God, the All-Love”
(19).

Form religious point of view, spiritualism comes form the reading its religious books. Although Hindu tradition maintains that the ultimate reality lies beyond all scriptures, it is equally convinced that the scriptures help people orient their minds and lives towards Brahman. To be a spiritualist Hinduism suggests to read holy books. Among them four vedas are most important. They are separately titled the Rig-Veda, Yajur-Veda, S ma-Veda, and Atharva-Veda, and collectively referred to as the Veda. Thikurdas writes an article “Universal Truth” in:

Swami Vivekananda called the religion of Upanishads a Universal Religion of the future humanity. For the future humanity will be full of knowledge, both scientific and spiritual. Upanishads have no fear of any truth whether of

external world (science) or internal world (spirituality). The Upanishads are free from all such superstitious elements. (*The Himalayan Times*, Feb. 2, 08:6)

Finally, the main spirit of the Hinduism is believes in god. They say, 'Truth is God'. It suggests to follow: untruth to truth; dark to light; and death to immortal. Truth, goodness, and beauty are nature of god. Believing god, reading all its holy books, and applying its theory in life, a man can be spiritual, gets salvation (moksha) and can adjust in god. Jostein Gaarder writes in *Sophis World* about philosophers need which bears the spirit of Hinduism:

And to be quite frank, that is precisely what we need philosophers for. We do not need them to choose a beauty queen or the day's bargain in tomatoes.

(This is why they are often unpopular!) Philosophers will try to ignore highly topical affairs and instead try to draw people's attention to what is eternally "true," eternally "beautiful," and eternally "good" (83).

Ginsberg often juxtaposes spiritual symbols and earthly, sometimes even vile, ones. Sometimes he speaks irreverently of religious icons: "hopeless cathedrals" "meat for the Synagogue cast on the pavement. Eric L Haralson says in *Encyclopedia of American Poetry*, "Ginsberg poem relay on the rhythm, breath, and elemental sounds of Hindu mantras, and are thus transform of poetic prayers (243).

The overall tone of the poem implies disillusionment with traditional religious values: for example, Ginsberg's heroes "pray for each other's salvation" and then "wait in vain." They "bare their brains to heaven under the El" but still must "listen to the terror through the walls." The last line of the poem, a version of the last words of Jesus, sums it all up: God, why have you forsaken me? As in Hindu philosophy the salvation is taken as Moksha. It is the ultimate goal which the theme of "Howl" indicates.

2.5. Christianity and Spiritualism

Both "Howl" and the passage from the New Testament discuss new and progressive social movements, each for their respective time periods, but the fundamentals of Christianity

and the fundamentals of Beat differ drastically. Archive.org writes in titled “Reading Ginsberg “Howl””: “While Jesus preaches, “Deny temptation... seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,” Ginsberg advocates drugs and promiscuous sex. While Jesus advises abstaining even from unholy thoughts (16 Sept. 07).

Ginsberg’s poetry lauds his contemporaries who have taken action, both constructive and destructive. While Jesus preaches, “your light will shine before humanity and glorify your father in heaven,” Ginsberg mocks biblical stories left and right and asserts there is no guiding light to follow. The only thing Jesus and Ginsberg have in common is they were each at one point in time frowned upon by mainstream society.

Any phenomenon as complex and as vital as Christianity is easier to describe historically than to define logically, but such a description does yield some insights into its continuing elements and essential characteristics. One such element is the centrality of the person of Jesus Christ. That centrality is, in one way or another, a feature of all the historical varieties of Christian belief and practice. Christians have not agreed in their understanding and definition of what makes Christ distinctive or unique. Certainly they would all affirm that his life and example should be followed and that his teachings about love and fellowship should be the basis of human relations. Large parts of his teachings have their counterparts in the sayings of the rabbis—that is, after all, what he was—or in the wisdom of Socrates and Confucius. In Christian teaching, Jesus cannot be less than the supreme preacher and exemplar of the moral life, but for most Christians that, by itself, does not do full justice to the significance of his life and work.

What is known of Jesus, historically, is told in the Gospels of the New Testament of the *Bible*. Other portions of the *New Testament* summarize the beliefs of the early Christian church. Paul and the other writers of Scripture believed that Jesus was the revealer not only of human life in its perfection but of divine reality itself. The ultimate mystery of the universe, called by many different names in various religions, was called “Father” in the

sayings of Jesus, and Christians therefore call Jesus himself "Son of God." At the very least, there was in his language and life an intimacy with God and an immediacy of access to God, as well as the promise that, through all that Christ was and did, his followers might share in the life of the Father in heaven and might themselves become children of God. Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, to which early Christians referred when they spoke about him as the one who had reconciled humanity to God, made the cross the chief focus of Christian faith and devotion and the principal symbol of the saving love of God the Father. Crookes, William says in *Researches on the Phenomena of Spiritualism*:

This love is, which Christians teach that God is almighty in dominion over all that is in heaven and on earth, righteous in judgment over good and evil, beyond time and space and change; but above all they teach that "God is love" (63).

The creation of the world out of nothing and the creation of the human race were expressions of that love, and so was the coming of Christ. The classic statement of this trust in the love of God came in the words of Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount: "Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?" (26)

Baptism "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," or sometimes perhaps more simply "in the name of Christ," has been from the beginning the means of initiation into Christianity. So far, in the "Footnote of Howl" Ginsberg wants holy everywhere, as he writes: Everything is holy! Everybody's holy! Everywhere is / Holy! Everyday is eternity! Everyman is an angel! (116)

Another fundamental component of Christian faith and practice is the Christian community itself—the church. Some scholars question the assumption that Jesus intended to found a church (the word church appears only twice in the Gospels), but his followers were always convinced that his promise to be with them "always, to the close of the age" found its

fulfillment in his “mystical body on earth,” the holy catholic (universal) church. The relation of this holy Catholic Church to the various ecclesiastical organizations of worldwide Christendom is the source of major divisions among these organizations. Roman Catholicism has tended to equate its own institutional structure with the Catholic Church, as the common usage of the latter term suggests, and some extreme Protestant groups have been ready to claim that they, and they alone, represent the true visible church. Increasingly, however, Christians of all segments have begun to acknowledge that no one group has an exclusive right to call itself “the” church and they have begun to work toward the reunion of all Christians.

Christianity gives great importance to spirit. According to Christianity the genuine power is spirit. They ignore body and give emphasis to spirit. The arrival of Christ is not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes man free from the law of sin and death. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. But they are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. Likewise the Spirit also helped our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groaning which cannot be uttered. And he that searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is? Because he makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

2.6. Ginsberg’s “Howl” in Relation to Zen Buddhism

According to Zen Buddhism, it is possible for a person to attain enlightenment in this life through the practice of meditation and development of mental and spiritual discipline.

The emphasis on meditation in Zen Buddhism is often misunderstood by people in the West. It is not simply a matter of sitting still - relaxing bubble baths while sipping green tea cannot qualify as proper Zen meditation. Instead, meditation is a rigorous practice designed to reveal things to you about yourself which are necessary for the purpose of attaining enlightenment.

Zen, does not ask us to concentrate our thought on the idea that dog is God, or that three pounds of flax are divine. When Zen does this it commits itself to a definite system of philosophy, and there is no more Zen. Zen just feels fire warm and ice cold, because when it freezes we shiver and welcome fire. The feeling is all in all, as Faust declares; all our theorization fails to touch reality. But "the feeling" here must be understood in its deepest sense or in its purest form. Even to say that "This is the feeling" means that Zen is no more there. Zen defies all concept-making. That is why Zen is difficult to grasp.

Whatever meditation Zen may propose, then, will be to take things as they are, to consider snow white and the raven black. When we speak of meditation we in most cases refer to its abstract character; that is, meditation is known to be the concentration of the mind on some highly generalized proposition, which is, in the nature of things, not always closely and directly connected with the concrete affairs of life. Critic Arthur Lloyd regards in *Wheat Among the Tares* about Zen as:

The Buddhist counterpart of 'Spiritual Exercises' shows a great inclination to find Christian analogies for things Buddhist, and this is one of such instances. Those who have at all a clear understanding of Zen will at once see how wide of the mark this comparison is. Even superficially speaking, there is not a shadow of similitude between the exercises of Zen and those proposed by the founder of the Society of Jesus (53).

Zen Buddhism, as a mode of spirituality, is highly reliant on the individual as it is primarily non-dogmatic. Enlightening states of mind can be experienced in a multitude of

ways; each journey is unique and irreproducible. One person may experience an enlightening or intensified moment of awareness while meditating in a Buddhist cultural center while another person may experience it while sitting in bumper-to-bumper traffic looking at the big blue sky. While these experiences are different from one another, one is not more valuable or legitimate than the other, since both lead to some higher level of consciousness, a particularized moment of being. Such is the non-totalizable nature of Buddhist poetry; as a total body of poetry, it cannot be captured by a single definition. It is vast and variegated, and the beauty of Schelling's work *The Wisdom Anthology of North American Buddhist Poetry* lies in the variety of texts which he provides.

The reader is exposed to writing styled after traditional Buddhist forms in addition to unconventional and experimental modes of poetry. Poetry is a pathway which can lead to a deeper and richer understanding. It is a realization of the oblique present tense grace of the experience of poetic practice itself (11).

However, the exact destination of this path is impossible to determine. It will be different for each poet and each audience upon each reading. Even re-reading the same poem will lead to a different place, a new thought, a new experience. Each breath taken and every passing moment are new and irreproducible. Buddhism and poetry share a homeomorphous relationship in that each of them separately is amorphous, existing outside the borders of materiality and regulation. Since there are no absolute rules, the door is open for almost anything.

In fact, mindfulness and awareness are their primary goals, and a method of practice to move towards this consciousness is meditation. As any Buddhist would tell you, pure mindfulness and awareness are difficult to achieve. People cycle in and out of intensified levels of consciousness, but the objective is to remain in a heightened state of awareness as long as possible. Similar to this level of mindfulness is John Keats's theory of negative

capability, “when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason – ... the sense of Beauty overcomes every other consideration, or rather obliterates all consideration.” This amplified state of mind requires practice, very focused and concentrated practice. Letting go of one’s ego, human intentions, and complications can allow the poem simply to occur, to come into its own as an art form manifesting the bizarre yet ordinary mindful phenomena.

While clearly a proponent of drug use as a spiritual aid, he brings up several interesting counter-arguments which challenge his stance. British-American philosopher Allen Watts points out in *The New Alchemy*:

Mystical experience seems altogether too easy when it simply comes out of a bottle” and that if drugs produce enlightening states of mind, then “spiritual insight is after all only a matter of body chemistry involving a total reduction of the spiritual to the material” However, in response, he asserts, “States akin to mystical experience arise only in certain individuals and then often depend upon considerable concentration and effort to use the change in consciousness in certain ways. These types of drugs can give the sense of transcending time and materiality, very much coinciding with the goals and the philosophy of Zen (59).

However, more conservative Zen practitioners may frown upon the lawless nature of using drugs, even to achieve a spiritual end. The rejection of drug use in religious practice is probably more political and moral than anything else. Perhaps the spiritual revelation itself is not derived from the substance but rather from its cultural significance.

Zen has been a cornerstone in the American counterculture for half a century. This can be largely attributed to the writers and artists of the Beat Generation. When the Beats haphazardly stumbled upon Buddhism and brought its ideals to the forefront of their writings,

little did they know that they were profoundly impacting the American literary tradition?

Schelling writes in the preface to his anthology:

One can't overstate the impact Ginsberg and Cage had on bringing Buddhist practice and thought into authentic discussions of modern poetry. Their influence compels not only poets but academic critics and book reviewers to recognize Buddhist ideas as central to American poetry (Schelling xiv).

Ginsberg and Kerouac accidentally found themselves on the Zen path after fortuitous mistakes in public libraries. Rick Fields describes their experiences in *How the Swans Came to the Lake: A Narrative History of Buddhism in America*:

Ginsberg happened upon a book about Buddhism in the New York Public Library and felt a strong connection with its teachings. From then onward, he pursued studies of Eastern spirituality. Similarly, Kerouac fell in love with Zen in a public library. He went to the library with the intention to read Thoreau, planning to "cut out from civilization, and go back and live in the woods" after writing his semi-autobiographical novel *The Subterraneans*, chronicling a desperate love affair (210).

Thoreau was constantly referencing Hindu philosophy. So he put down Thoreau to find a book on Hinduism but instead unexpectedly happened upon a book called *The Life of Buddha*. These writings can be found in the collection *Some of the Dharma*.

In March of 1955, Ginsberg read his most famous poem, "Howl," at the Six Gallery in San Francisco. Here, he met Kenneth Rexroth, a self-taught translator of Chinese and Japanese poetry, who introduced him to Gary Snyder, a student at Berkeley and a forerunner in the backwoods, naturalistic style of Zen poetry. In turn, Ginsberg introduced Kerouac to Snyder, and a community of Zen poets and friends was born on the West Coast of America. Zen became associated with underground artistic and intellectual communities. Watts draws the distinction between this trendy form of Zen, which he calls "Beat Zen," and true Zen.

Zen with the rebellion against American conformity as demonstrated by the Beats. Therefore, Zen became a license for them to exercise their disdain for the political and social milieu of America, a confusion of spirituality with politics, art, and society in which the true identity of Zen became distorted. Watts says that “the Bohemian way of life is a symptom of creative changes in manners and morals which at first seem as reprehensible to conservatives as new forms in art” (99).

While many writers of this period were zeniths, Zen necessitated neither their separation from society nor their abandonment of convention. Watt contends that:

Zen resulted in a type of person like “the cool, fake-intellectual hipster searching for kicks, name dropping bits of Zen and jazz jargon to justify a disaffiliation from society which is in fact just ordinary, callous exploitation of other people” (101).

Zen was a way in which they could turn inward and spiritually deal with their beliefs and their distaste for American politics, society, etc. “Beat Zen,” on the other hand, uses Zen to justify rebellion. Watts also points out the problem of drug use among those who have adhered to Zen as something that is trendy and fashionable. He says,

“In these circles the smoking of marijuana is ... defiance of square authority. ... It is a matter of symbolic principle, as distinct from the enforcement of rational law.” Once again, Zen becomes an excuse for the counterculture to challenge authority, to demonstrate their separation from the rest of society (102).

Zen perceives and feels, and does not abstract and meditate. Zen penetrates and is finally lost in the immersion. In “Howl” Ginsberg express Zen Buddhism as the spirit through its spiritual symbol, metaphor, language, etc.

CHAPTER-3

“Howl”: In Search of Spiritualism

3.1. Sex, Drink, Despair and Spiritualism in “Howl”

Allen Ginsberg's poem “Howl” is a complex and intriguing poem about the divine in the common world. The minor themes of drugs, despair and sexuality work together to illuminate the major theme of spirituality. Although many of the Beat writers were homosexual or bisexual, it was Ginsberg who made his sexuality an integral part of his public image and his poetry. “Howl” was the first poem to bring Ginsberg public attention, and its treatment of homosexuality is characteristic of Ginsberg's position during this time. “Howl” is a lament for "the best minds of my generation," the "angelheaded hipsters" destroyed by the cruelties of American society. The homosexual functions in the world of “Howl” as a figure of angelic innocence, his love a protest against the insensitivity and madness.

Ginsberg's relation to Whitman is clear in “Howl”. Ginsberg learned from Whitman the use of the long line, the repetition of the subordinate clause ("who let," "who blew," "who balled," etc.), and the celebration of phallic energy. The line "who balled in the morning in the evenings in rose gardens and the grass of public parks and cemeteries scattering their semen freely to whomever come who may"(30) shows Ginsberg's assumption of Whitman's democratic sexuality--the celebration of anonymous sexuality and the sharing of the poet's seminal energy. As Ginsberg sees divine in drug, love Whitman also sees; Joel Myerson writes in *Whitman in his Own Time*: I strove to deem him great and fain / Would love a thing divine (124).

Whitman's depiction of the sources of mystic vision as sexual, it should be remembered that Whitman's sexuality is portrayed as both active and passive, and that Whitman devotes as much attention to the image of two lovers simply happy to be together as to actual moments of sexual penetration. In Ginsberg the desire for religious vision is transformed into a desire to be fucked, whereas in Whitman the experience of sexual pleasure

leads to a greater understanding of the world. Although Ginsberg calls on Whitman, he transforms an ultimately peaceful vision of human unity into an affirmation of the homosexual's alienation from the "straight" world and a desire to become an object of love rather than a participant in it. Here, as in the later poems, Ginsberg links his passive sexuality to his poetics, as he rejects the "craftsman's loom" for the orgasmic scream. As Jerome Betty and other writers in write in *The Norton Anthology to Literature* says giving Sharon Olds poem *Sex without Love*:

Sometimes poems create, as well, a powerful sense of the way minds and emotions work by varying normal syntactical order in special ways. Listen, for example, in the following poem to the speaker's sudden loss of vocal control in the midst to what seems to be a calm analysis of her feeling about sexual behavior ().

The poem is:

How do they do it, the ones who make love
Without love? Beautiful as dancers,
Gliding over each other like ice-skaters
over the ice, (1-4)

"Howl" also links the visionary and the concrete, the language of mystical illumination and the language of the street, and the two are joined not in a static synthesis but in a dialectical movement in which an exhausting and punishing immersion in the most sordid of contemporary realities issues in transcendent vision. Ginsberg is still uneasy about life in the body, which he more often represents as causing pain . . . than pleasure; but in this way he is . . . "pained" into Vision. At the close of "Howl," having looked back over his life, Ginsberg can affirm a core self of "unconditioned spirit" and sympathetic humanity that has survived an agonizing ordeal.

The poem begins by immersing us in the extremities of modern urban life,

overwhelming and flooding us with sensations . . . of modern civilization's indifference and hostility, which provoke a desperate search for something beyond it, for spiritual illumination. Again and again, the young men are left "beat" and exhausted, alone in their empty rooms, trapped in time--at which point they gain glimpses of eternity. "Howl" constantly pushes toward exhaustion, a dead end, only to have these ends twist into moments of shuddering ecstasy. In one of the poem's metaphors, boundaries are set down, push in on and enclose the self--then suddenly disintegrate. At such times terror shifts to ecstasy; the 'madman bum' is discovered to be the angelheaded hipster.

At the limits of despair--with the active will yielded up--Ginsberg experiences a sudden infusion of energy; the poem's mood dramatically turns and the concluding lines of Part I affirm the self's power to love and to communicate within a living cosmos.

Immediately following the poem's most despairing lines come its most affectionate:

ah, Carl, while you are not safe I am not safe, and now you're in the total
animal soup of time

And who therefore ran though the icy streets obsessed with a sudden flash of
the alchemy of the use of the ellipse the catalog the meter & the
vibrating plane, (73-74).

Ginsberg does not seek a cautious self-insularity, and he here endorses vulnerability to danger and a tender identification with the victims of time and history. "I saw the best minds of my generation," Ginsberg had begun, as if a prophetic and retrospective detachment exempted him from the fate he was describing; but Ginsberg now writes from inside the ordeal, as if the aim of writing were not to shape or contain, but sympathetically to enter an experience. By his own unrestrained outpouring of images and feelings Ginsberg exposes himself as writer to literary ridicule and rejection, and he does risk the annihilation of his poetic self in the released flood of raw experience and emotion. But by risking these dangers Ginsberg can achieve the kind of poetry he describes in Part I's last six lines, a poetry that

bridges the gap between selves by incarnating the author's experience, making the reader, too, feel it as a "sensation."

In Part II, strengthened by his descent and return, he can confront his persecutor angrily, his words striving for magical force as they strike, like a series of hammer blows, against the iron walls of Moloch. Moloch is an ancient deity to whom children were sacrificed, just as the 'brains and imagination' of the present generation are devoured by a jealous and cruel social system. Moloch stands broadly for authority--familial, social, literary manifests in skyscrapers, prisons, factories, banks, madhouses, armies, governments, technology, money, bombs, Moloch represents a vast, all-encompassing social reality that is at best unresponsive (a "concrete void"), at worst a malign presence that feeds off individuality and difference. Moloch—'whose mind is pure machinery'—is pure reason and abstract form. Moloch is also 'the heavy judger of men,' the parent whose chilling glance can terrify the child, paralyze him with self-doubt and make him feel 'crazy' and 'queer.' Moloch, then, is the principle of separation and conflict in life, an external force so powerful that it eats its way inside and divides the self against itself. It is Moloch who is the origin of all the poem's images of stony coldness. Ginsberg's driving, heated repetition of the name, moreover, creates the feeling that Moloch is everywhere, surrounding, enclosing--a cement or iron structure inside of which the spirit, devoured, sits imprisoned and languishing. Like in the T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* Ginsberg uses the same type of language. *The waste Land* begins:

April is the cruelest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire,... (1-3).

If we illustrate it as, it is quickening to the human spirit. Sex here is sterile, breeding not life and fulfillment but disgust ascidia and unanswerable question. Although, as Michael North edits in T.S. Eliot poem, *The Waste Land*: it is a harmony of human culture with the

natural environment and express on extreme sense of unity life (174). We can say Moloch for Spirituality.

Moloch whom I abandon! (line 88). Ginsberg cries out at one point. Yet in spite of all the imprecations and even humor directed against this ubiquitous presence, the release of pent-up rage is finally not liberating; anger is not the way out. Part II begins with bristling defiance, but it ends with the loss, futility, and self-contempt as Ginsberg sees all he values, "visions! omens! hallucinations! miracles! ecstasies!"--"the whole boatload of sensitive bullshit"--"gone down the American river!" And at the close of Part II, similar to the moment in Part I when the hipsters, with shaven heads and harlequin speech, present themselves for lobotomy, the mood here is hysterically suicidal, with anger, laughter, and helplessness combining in a giddy self-destructiveness. An outpouring of anger against constricting authority may be a stage in the process of self-liberation, but it is not its end; anger, perpetuating divisions, perpetuates Moloch. In fact, as the last line of Part II shows, such rage, futile in its beatings against the stony consciousness of Moloch, at last turns back on the self in acts that are, however zany, suicidal.

Part III, dramatically shifting from self-consuming rage to renewal in love, a kind of self-integration, a balancing of destructive and creative impulses, is sought. "Carl Solomon! I'm with you in Rockland," Ginsberg begins, turning from angry declamatory rhetoric to a simple, colloquial line, affectionate and reassuring in its rocking rhythm. Part III's refrain thus establishes a context of emotional support and spiritual communion, and it is from this "base," taking off in increasingly more daring flights of rebellious energy, that Ginsberg finally arrives at his "real" self.

Ginsberg perceives himself as art of a "generation," victims sharing a collective historical fate. The best minds among them, Ginsberg says in passive voice, were "destroyed by madness"—as if madness were some sort of danger abroad in the world, like a hurricane or a virus, and could descend upon the individual mind to destroy it. Moreover, "madness"

seems choosy about its victims, singling out the best minds to destroy; perhaps they go mad because they are the best minds. The three adjectives perched on the end of the line—"starving hysterical naked"—may at first seem mere overwriting. But they suggest that these elect "best minds" are "starving" not only for food, drugs, and sex, but for spiritual transcendence, for "the ancient heavenly connection to the starry dynamo in the machinery of night" (line 126). Such yearning seems mystical only to a society that represses its own hunger for spiritual (as well as sexual) exploration. They are "naked" not only in their refusal to wear the clothes of social convention, or in preparation for lovemaking, but also in their vulnerability. In refusing all covering, they refuse protection also. Although "minds" stands metonymically for persons and emphasizes consciousness rather than the body, these "minds" are presented in predominantly bodily terms: one thinks of the body in connection with the words "naked" and "starving," and even "hysterical" derives from the Greek word for "womb." The effect of Ginsberg's language is to sexualize the concept of "mind," making it more bodily and instinctive, while simultaneously spiritualizing the body, making its hunger and nakedness into emblems of religious yearning.

Generalizing generational experience in Parts I and II, Ginsberg shows these "best minds" veering back and forth between extremes, with the suddenness and intensity of an electric current leaping between two poles; they adopt attitudes of defiance, longing, terror, zaniness, hysteria, prayer, anger, joy, tears, exhaustion--culminating in the absolutes of madness and suicide. Clothes and then flesh are constantly being stripped away in this ordeal; the "best minds" are exposed and tormented, then cast out into the cold and darkness. So they are at once hounded and neglected ("unknown" and "forgotten" in the poem's words). But modern civilization's indifference and hostility provoke a desperate search for something beyond it for spiritual illumination. As it is stated in Ginsberg's "Footnote to Howl,"

Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy!

Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy!

The world is holy! The soul is holy! The skin is holy!

The nose is holy! The tongue and cock and hand
and asshole holy!

Everything is holy! everybody's holy! everywhere is
holy! everyday is in eternity! Everyman's an
angel!

The bum's as holy as the seraphim! the madman is
holy as you my soul are holy! (114-117)

Very few themes overlap the three sections and footnote to “Howl”. Two that provide a thematic groundwork for the poem are time and religion. They brought to society a consciousness of a life worth living. They offered a method of escape from the stultifying, unimaginative world we live in through the exploration of one's intellect. Allen Ginsberg's “Howl” does all of these things and more in an unforgettable, inspirational way. The poem points the way toward a new and better existence, chronicling the pilgrimage of the “mad generation” toward a reality that is timeless and placeless, holy and eternal which is the gist of spiritualism.

3.2. Spiritual Freedom in “Howl”

From the very beginning of the poem “Howl,” Ginsberg designates the idea of freedom, it is the freedom of blacks, and it is the freedom of best mind's which are historically dragged, it is the humanities freedom. Humanities freedom indicates spiritual freedom. Ginsberg remained a radical poet, the embodiment of the ideals of personal freedom, non-conformity, and the search for enlightenment. Without any fear he evokes the freedom for all human. Freedom is here presented for wisdom as J Krishnamurti writes in *Education and the significance of life* as: Wisdom does not come from fear and oppression but through observation and understanding of everyday incident in human relationship (66).

Ginsberg considered the writing of "Howl" to be a new phase in his poetic development, best characterized by total creative freedom. This freedom consists mainly of an escape from "fear" to total openness and honesty. Ray Carney writes in *Howl on Trial: The Battle for Free Expression* about Ginsberg's internal freedom:

Ginsberg worked with his own "neural impulses and writing impulses" to arrive at a pattern "organically, rather than synthetically." The poem, he states, was, "typed out madly in one afternoon, a tragic custard-pie comedy of wild phrasing and meaningless images" (24).

In order to read "Howl" properly, one must avoid the impulse to search for a logical or rational connection of ideas. Analysis or explanation of the poem would seem to be in competition with the poem's own message, which is literally a violent "Howl" of human anguish and other spontaneous feelings.

"Howl" has special qualities to offer such as it has song type of music; it is seeking a spiritual freedom which is the freedom for system. Allen Ginsberg has a unique style for his poetry which was called confessional poetry. Without any fear confessional poets express the idea of pain or freedom of humanity, leaving the material world they talk about the fleeing of heart, a spiritual language. "Howl" is creative outburst and demands freedom of life without and restriction like Devkota's *The Lunatic*:

A friend of mine pinched me so sharp.
And said, "Oh mad man,
Is the flesh now dead?"
Year by year such things did occur,
And still, my friend, I am insane
Such is my plight. (lines 76-81)

There were many similarities between the beat generation and the hippies as many characteristics of the former were not lost in the transition. There is the emphasis on Eastern

philosophy and religion that morphed into mysticism; the anarchist ravings for more freedom morphed into pacifist sloganistic "Make love not war" mass sittings; the beats' liberal attitude to sexuality and freedom of expression also gave way to more open hippie gay and bisexual movements; the use of drugs to emulate the jazz musicians, fuel days of writing without rest and to explore the fringes of perception and consciousness continued in more experimentation in psychedelic drugs and hallucinogens. Exactly "Howl" is the exploration of suppressed mind as the spirit of Jazz. Loren Schoenberg define Jazz in his book *The NPR Curious Listerine's Guide to Jazz*:

The sense of tolerance in general and the intermingling of the races in particular, also allowed for the development of the unique musical culture in New Oreland's- a musical culture often to a great diversity of sound and styles (9).

Besides steering the direction of the hippie movement, the beat generation generally also helped shape the road of American consumerism, ironically. According to William S. Burroughs, Jack Kerouac's *On The Road (1958)* opened a million coffee bars and sold a million pairs of Levis to both sexes."

The beat generation, mostly, challenged the literary norm of the day, but the permanent extent of the change is limited. The beat writers abandoned what they thought was the restrictive, rigid formality of established literary form and structure, campaigned for absolute spontaneity in writing. "The best, once-beat, and post-beat poets continue to hold their ground, but they constitute one more school," writes David Gates, and he notes that "mainstream-modern lyric poets like John Ashbery still win most of the prizes and get most of the teaching gigs." It is true that very few of the beat writers have their work taken seriously by the literary establishment, and few serious writers will actually like to write like them due to the many reservations the literary authorities have of them.

However, the beat generation did revolutionaries the pop and rock music industry in through the 60s to the 80s. They follow Jazz music. It was correlate the spirit of Jazz and Beat Generation and Beat freedom, Peter includes a song in his book Jazz in American Culture:

You can't dig this song
You play at midnight
Unless
Life faces
Have bathed your face. (Townsend 130)

The sparse libertarian style of the beats influenced the bands to adopt a freer and more direct expression of their inner feelings, this lyrical style characterized most of the bands, where expressed in punk, rock or pop, has its roots in the beat generation. Peter Trwensend further adds:

As in the 1950s Kerouac had aspired to reproduce the can defense of bebop in his prose and poetry. So, the writer of New Black poetry seemed to emulate the extreme formal liberation of 'Free Jazz' in highly variegated and irregular use they made the pleasure of prosody and typography (130).

The beat generation, in truth, cannot be said to have far-reaching effects, but it is an attractive road for many disillusioned and alienated young souls belonging to any time and place who aspire to be the melancholic, talented, saintly outsider either modeled after the beat figures themselves or the downtrodden that the beats so eulogized. For many, this may be a shallow posturing that they will eventually grow out of. But we feel that the beats were more important than just a exciting glimpse of the alternative lifestyle of sex, drugs, poetry and jazz.

It is the sense of freedom and carelessness that Ginsberg finds admirable in the "best of minds." They take complete control of their actions and simply disregard the rest of the

community. These "minds" go beyond the acceptable norms of society, whether to prove a point or simply use/abuse their personal freedoms (taking it perhaps too far). These people seem too to shared qualities/experiences that Ginsberg himself had felt. The things that these great "minds" are radical and therefore set them apart from the rest of a contained American society.

3.3. Beat Poets on Spiritualism

The Twentieth Century has witnessed several moments which have helped to shape the face of American culture. Each movement has in some way altered the way we, as Americans, think and act. One of the most influential literary movements of this century has been that of the Beat movement. The Beats were initially a small group of individuals situated in New York. The Beat writers were a small group of friends at first, and a movement later. The Beat Generation in literature consisted of a relatively small number of writers, of which Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg and William S. Burroughs are the best known today. Their purpose was to provoke, to challenge, to question the changes caused by the new technologies, to help Americans to remember that this too was once a place where men could dream of a better future. Karhryn VanSpanchkeren writes in *Outline of American literature about "Beat Poets"* and their attitudes:

Beat poet was the most antiestablishment from of literature in the United States, but beneath its shocking words lies a love of country. The poetry is a cry of pain and rage at what the poets see as the loss of America's innocence and the tragic waste of its human and material resources (87).

The Beats were dissatisfied with America's blandness. McDonalds and bigger department store chains had Americans eating, dressing and furnishing their homes the same way. The emerging television set within homes had Americans informed and entertained from one single media point. So bland! They felt a lack of purpose in life both socially and culturally, they needed a way out. They found their purpose through literature, social

contacts, and freedom. The Beats had a real appreciation for their freedom and fought to expand it. John Clellon Holmes in *Nothing More to Declare*, not surprisingly, specifically singles out two works as typifying the 'beat' ethos, namely Ginsberg's "Howl," which:

[M]ade its own way into the mind of its times on the lips of thousands of young people, for whom it had the paradoxical effect of all revelation - it said precisely what they were thinking and feeling but could not manage, themselves, to heave into words. It was the biography of a part of our era (62).

They liked the ability to pick up and go *On the Road*, which is the title of Jack Kerouac's book describing his adventures hitchhiking across country. The Beats would define themselves "as poets in a land of philistines, men seeking spiritual destinies rather than material ones." They set out on journeys trying to find themselves. They set out to impact America socially and culturally, as a result they impacted the country politically. Politicians and Conservatives alike became more and more afraid of the so call "radicals" corrupting the youth making them think!

They shaped a vision of complete political, spiritual, and sexual liberation, and brought a new kind of realism to art, in which spontaneity and improvisation were stressed. They experienced with new writing styles, such as Kerouac's "spontaneous prose," and the new ways of living, experimental methods that pushed the term "freedom" to its society-burdened limit with adventures that included crime, hedonistic parties, and the brilliance of their work that made writers of the Beat generation noticeable to the public. Everywhere they went, they celebrated the beauties of life: nature, literature, artwork, and experience. The Beat Generation cultural movement defied conventional values of the 1950's and ignited the counterculture of the 1960's.

The original word meant nothing more than bad or ruined or spent. Jack Kerouac coined the term "beat," with all it's hipster significance, during a conversation with Herbert Hunke a junkie, prostitute, petty thug, and aspiring writer he used the expression "Man I'm

beat!" which meant that he was tired. Huncke used the term "beat" to describe his general feelings and outlook on life. It was at this time that young people were beginning to feel neglected, rundown, and outcasts. Jack had a field day with this expression. The kind of beatness is what described Kerouac and his friends; bright young Americans who'd come of age during the World War II but couldn't fit in as clean-cut soldiers or complacent young businessmen. They were beat because they didn't believe in straight jobs and had to struggle to survive. They lived in dirty apartments, sold drugs and committed crimes for food money. They hitchhiked across America because they couldn't stay still without getting bored.

Kerouac states in *Angel Headed Hipster* as:

"It's the beat generation, it's the beat to keep, it's the beat of the heart, it's being beat and down in the world and like old-time lowdown and like in ancient civilizations the slave boatmen rowing galleys to a beat and servants spinning pottery to a beat" (35).

The term "beat" has a second more spiritual meaning; "beatific" or sacred and holy. Kerouac was a devout Catholic and explained many times that by describing his generation as beat he was trying to capture the secret holiness of the oppressed.

The Beats were soon beat, beaten down by the government, beaten by the police, beaten down by any and all controlling establishments, including, for some time, the literary world, and the only thing Kerouac and Ginsberg and Burroughs had left was the determination to keep the beat, to listen to their hear beats, to groove to the beat of jazz that they loved, and to celebrate the true spirit of the lower class, the real Beat Generation.

The identification of the oppressed and society's outcasts was a key to Beat writing. The Beats were intrigued by the hobos, the racially stigmatized, sexual outlaws, criminals, and drug addicts. This was because they saw these social groups as having rejected mainstream America, and they believed that a new vision of life would only emerge once the thin layer of "civilized values" was stripped away.

The Beats used their poetry, literature, and other forms of art to describe what they observed daily. It was common to find beats sitting on park benches all day with a notepad describing what they saw, in great detail, and transforming it into poetry or just relating it later to friends.

Jazz at in the 50's was seen only as black music, the Beats admired African-American's spirituality and to bring poetry and literature into a wider audience. It took the poet out of the bookish, academic world and forces him to compete with acrobats, singers, and midgets. When Ginsberg traveled Asia than it contribute to speak about war resistance and it developed a type of freedom as George Parkins and Barbara Parkins writes in *The American Tradition in Literature* as:

His travel in Europe, Asia, and South America, his advocates Zen Buddhism of hallucinatory drugs and of homosexuality, and his involvement of civil rights campaign, war resistance, an attacks on the C.I.A. have done as much to keep him in the public eye since appearance of *Howl* as has his poetry (1691).

Buddhism became the religion of the Beats because it most closely approximated their experience. There was no need to believe in God, heaven, hell or an afterlife. Rational thinking was their dogma. Buddhism had a clean image because it could not be blamed for creating the dark side of America. It preached peacefulness, harmony with nature and non-attachment to material goods. It's leaders were not men in suits and ties who led million dollar religious organizations, but were monks in robes who practiced a simple lifestyle and condemned no-one. Young people of those days really ate these ideas up because it spoke to them on a non-conformist level. There was no conformity in this religion or a guru telling what they should or should not do. Besides "Christian" America had dropped atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Which makes it even more legitimate to reject "Christian" American policies.

The character Sal Paradise in *On The Road*, searches for soul in a world that seemed to be losing its soul. This character Sal is a disguised portrait of Kerouac himself. The story of *On The Road* is an actual account of Jack and Neal Cassady's experiences hitchhiking and traveling throughout America's countryside.

These books inspired young people of that day to search within themselves for their souls and to teach them adventures lie all in their grasp. To break the cycle of conformity and blandness that American society was going through and live their lives to the fullest extent. Most young people did that, including a young Bob Dylan, who searched within himself, and decided to write songs and created his own adventures. Bob Dylan is an official beat. Critics abused the Beats, criticizing their openness and blaming them for the rebellious corrupt youth. The Beats were never recognized as brilliant literary figures until recently.

Beatnik is a term made up by columnist Herb Caen, it is a derogatory term. It reflected the society's attention to the Beats and the recently launched soviet satellite Sputnik. Alas, when many young people and aspiring writers were finding their souls and newly found adventures others were in it for the wild parties of marijuana and hallucinogenic drugs. The Beat writers especially despised the young beatniks who dressed in black, beat on bongo drums, smoked marijuana and complained about how many their parents were a drag. They were no longer following the spiritual movement that had been created for them.

After the publication of Ginsberg's controversial poem "Howl" and Kerouac's *On The Road* the Beat Generation was known throughout American and even the world. There was a political movement going on, a movement spurred on by a group of writers and poets who honored the lower class, rejected the mainstream, and they proclaimed their love of freedom, freedom from all constrictions regarding both their free-verse styles of writing and their unconfined way of life. The Beat Generation opened the eyes of the world to the unconventional, and, by doing so, made its mark as one of the most significant literary movements of this century. Kerouac writes in *On the Road*:

The Beat Generation , that was a vision that we had, John Clellon Holmes and I, and Allen Ginsberg in an even wilder way, in the late Forties, of a generation of crazy illuminated hipsters suddenly rising and roaming America, serious, curious, bumming and hitchhiking everywhere, ragged, beatific, beautiful in an ugly graceful new way (47).

He argues that he can still be an American and embrace alternative cultural and spiritual ideas. In this context *On the Road* can be read as an experiment in this alternative American Dream, symbolized by Dean Moriarty and carefully chronicled by Sal Paradise. Dean Moriarty, like the dreams of a father never found and the American Dream itself, is an illusion: 'Old Dean Moriarty the father we never found...' (281).

Kerouac sought to explain his concept of the spiritual aspect of "Beat" in "The Origins of The Beat Generation," arguing that the etymology, for him, of the word "Beat" has characteristics of beatitude and beatific. He does however also define it narrowly, suggesting that there are multiple meanings to "Beat," in *The Origins of The Beat Generation* as there are for the American Dream, saying:

"The word 'beat' originally meant poor, down and out, dead-beat, 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 new gesture, or attitude, which I can only describe as a new *more*. 'Beat Generation' has simply become the slogan or label for a revolution in manners in America" (62).

In "Aftermath: *The Philosophy of the Beat Generation*" Kerouac spoke out against this distortion of his ideas:

The Beat Generation, that was a vision that we had, John Clellon Holmes and I, and Allen Ginsberg in an even wilder way, in the late Forties, of a generation of crazy, illuminated hipsters suddenly rising and roaming

America, serious, bumming and hitchhiking everywhere, ragged, beatific, beautiful in an ugly graceful new way--a vision gleaned from the way we had heard the word "beat" spoken on street corners on Times Square and in the Village, in other cities in the downtown city night of postwar America--beat, meaning down and out but full of intense conviction (36).

The Beats left their openness, their light, their freedom of expression, and their liberating soul searching to America's communities. Their words have enriched our everyday lives and to them we must credit some of the best literary works of the 20th century. They broke the cycles of conformity and led an uprising of spiritual awareness and freedom.

3.4. "Howl": Poetic Devices in Relation to Spiritual Illumination

The two aspects which perhaps contribute most to the poem's literary power are "tightness" and spontaneity. The first of these two has to do with what Ginsberg called "density" - the richness of imagery packed into a given line. The poem achieves this with the help of an escape from grammatical continuity. The rules of grammar are abandoned in order to place images densely in carefully chosen proximity to other images. The other aspect of the poem which brings the language to life is its spontaneity. Ginsberg has discovered a way to sustain a long line of poetry without allowing it to lapse into prose. He leaps from one image or perception to another with speed. This spontaneity gives the poem a feeling of uncontrived honesty.

These technical aspects of the poem contribute to its power in very important way. "Howl's" spontaneity and collection of juxtaposed images give the poem a "voice" that may be both defiant and celebratory in the same line. This is the voice of the Beat Generation, at once reacting against the increasingly commercial and conformist Eisenhower years and celebrating the rise of a new counterculture. About the poetic style of "Howl," Wayne Franklin groups of poets writes in *The Norton Anthology American Literature*:

Howl's spontaneity of surface conceals but grows out of Ginsberg's care and self-consciousness about rhythm and meter under the influence of William Carlos Williams, who had befriended him in Paterson after leaving the mental hospital. Ginsberg had started carrying around a notebook to record the rhythms of voices around him (2633).

Ginsberg frequently brought up spirituality or religion in the poem "Howl". At the beginning of the poem he introduces the "angelheaded hipsters burning for the ancient heavenly connection...who bared their brains to Heaven under the El and saw Mohammedan angels..." (3-5) He also caught my attention when he talked about those "who studied Plotinus or St. John of the Cross telepathy and boy kabala because the cosmos instinctively vibrated at their feet in Kansas, who loned in through the streets of Idaho seeking visionary Indian angels who were visionary Indian angels." This approach in these excerpts coincides with the overall tone of the poem: hostile, in disagreement. Ginsberg is exposing what he sees as the bullshit of society. And he does not hold back in doing so.

Ginsberg's use of religious diction and imagery help to intensify the importance of the issues he is trying to stress about America and Eternity, a hopeless task to notion that America is set up to last as an institution for a very long time. However, if society stays on the path it is taking, then the country will not last forever. Hence, I think that by integrating the spiritual comparisons and images he is making an effort to grab his audience's attention and slightly scare them as well.

"Holy" is belonging to or derived from or associated with a divine power. Ginsberg's extreme use of the word holy is not to support the common view of "holy" but rather emphasize its versatility. "Holy" is whatever this counterculture or any other counterculture or any other person lives for, whether they survive by feeding off of the mere search for the next plane of existence. Biblically, the world is "holy", needless to say the million other things Ginsberg deems as holy, and he throws out such opposite concepts as being holy to

prove his point further that “holy” is what a person makes it. He respects all his friends who did so, as well as all of the other participating counterculture followers.

Ginsberg uses religious language because his lifestyle, the beat lifestyle, became a religion to those involved. Some of the images Ginsberg describes seem either like a great spiritual vision or a crazy drugged hallucination.

Ginsberg’s use of religious imagery was very effective and powerful. Particularly in the second part when he keeps using the word “Moloch!” A “Moloch” is a deity whose worship is marked by the sacrifice of children by their parents. It can also mean anything conceived requiring appalling sacrifice. This word and image is very loaded. The word Moloch can be a reference to Jesus’ sacrifice in the New Testament, in addition to the sacrifice of the culture, youth, and environment of the time to modern American capitalism. In the poem, money and monetary gain or the deity for which many important aspects of American culture are being sacrificed. Ginsberg states,

Moloch whose mind is pure machinery! Moloch whose
blood is running money! Moloch whose fingers
are ten armies! Moloch whose breast is a cannibal
dynamo! Moloch whose ear is a smoking
tomb!

Moloch whose eyes are a thousand blind windows!
Moloch whose skyscrapers stand in the long
streets like endless Jehovahs!.. (84-85)

In this way, Ginsberg mocks the American focus on industrial advancement by showing that people were sacrificing American youth and our nation’s future for monetary gain.

Despite the fact that Ginsberg portrays a sarcastic view of the world, he does show a sense of reverence any time he mentions religion. He capitalizes any major word having to do

with a religious icon or well-known object. Ginsberg's word choice! The "Footnote to *Howl*" and its unusual punctuation instantly intrigued me. In what would appear to be a spiritual release and intellectual epiphany, Ginsberg discovers "everything is holy." In great contrast to his somber review of American existence throughout the rest of the poem the footnote celebrates the odd. With exclamations such as "holy the lone juggernaut" and "holy the lamb of the middle class" Ginsberg assures that it does not take society's definition of pure and successful to be holy and worthy of awe. For "everyman's an angel," it simply takes the patience (or drugs) to perceive it.

Most of the poem "Howl" is written using the same "who" to characterize those he viewed as 'the best minds.' In the Bible, Jesus is preaching to his disciples and teaches them who is blessed in God's eyes. In this saying, Jesus begins each of the lines by saying 'blessed are...' and then proceeds to give a group of people and why in God's eye they are blessed. Ginsberg's use of 'who' to express the 'best minds,' is similar to Jesus' use of 'blessed are,' in the sense that they both are exemplifying a group of people who they feel are admirable.

In the selections from *The Bible*, there are different places mentioned where Jesus went - from an exceedingly high mountain back down to earth. These places are mentioned to show that no matter where on earth you go, God is with you and that you need to be faithful to him. Likewise, various places are mentioned in "Howl" - from coast to coast in America. This technique is also used to show the seriousness of something, but instead of showing that faithfulness is everywhere in the world, it's used to show that corruption and misery are everywhere in the US. Both mention various places to emphasize how widespread their message or topic reaches.

Ginsberg often juxtaposes spiritual symbols and earthly, sometimes even vile, ones. Sometimes he speaks irreverently of religious icons: 'hopeless cathedrals,' meat for the Synagogue cast on the pavement, but more often he elevates unlikely images like "Zen New

Jersey” and “Harlem crowned in flame. This technique has the effect of making the heroes in the poem seem larger than life. Neal Cassidy becomes an ‘angel-headed hipster,’ sex-starved sailors become ‘human seraphim,’ and they all drive around in ‘hotrod-Golgotha’s.’ The overall tone of the poem implies disillusionment with traditional religious values: for example, Ginsberg’s heroes ‘pray for each other’s salvation’ and then ‘wait in vain.’ They ‘bare their brains to heaven under the EI’ but still must ‘listen to the terror through the walls.’ The last line of the poem, a version of the last words of Jesus, sums it all up: ‘God, why have you forsaken me?’

Ginsberg uses this religious or spiritual language and ideas because to him and much of his generation “beat” became a quasi religion. Beat was a way of life – a way to connect with a spiritual side of one’s self, a way to escape regular life. It is not a surprise that “Howl” became somewhat of a ‘beat bible.’

The power of “Howl” goes far beyond what is achieved through technical methods. The themes in the poem are most important in representing the message of the Beat Generation. The author sets himself as an observer in a mad world. He is witness to the destruction of "the best minds of my generation" by madness (9). Here madness in the first section of the poem is used to describe the workings of these minds. They are "burning for the ancient heavenly connection to the starry dynamo in the machinery of the night," and they have "bared their brains to Heaven" (9). Later madness comes as a reference to Ginsberg’s own commitment to an asylum (15) as well as the application of this theme to a specific individual, Carl Solomon, who is undergoing treatment at Rockland State Hospital (16). These minds are martyrs in the sense that they have chosen to embrace madness as an alternative to the unbearable sanity of the real world. Their madness consists of their refusal to accept a non-spiritual view of the world, in their ‘burning for the ancient heavenly connection’ in a civilization that has pronounced God dead.

“Howl” is written under the influence of peyote, is an accusation: “What sphinx of cement and aluminum bashed open the skulls and ate up their brains and imagination?” (17) Here, the antagonist is named as “Moloch,” who becomes the symbol for social illness. It is perhaps most constructive to read this part simply as an indictment of those elements in modern society that lead to the “Mad generation” being hurled “down upon the rocks of Time” (18). “Carl Solomon! I’m with you in Rockland where you’re madder than I am” (19). “I’m with you in Rockland” becomes a repeated phrase that causes the section to read as a sympathy card from Ginsberg to Solomon. Solomon comes to represent what the author considers to be a general condition.

“Footnote to Howl,” actually a separate poem, offers a cure for the social illness represented by Moloch in part two. Ginsberg has consciously designed these two sections to be roughly parallel to each other. The name “Moloch” is replaced with the word “holy.”

Moloch whose eyes are a thousand blind windows!

Moloch whose skyscrapers stand in the long
streets like endless Jehovahs! Moloch whose fac-
tories dream and croak in the fog! Moloch whose
smokestacks and antennae crown the cities! (line 85)

Holy the solitudes of skyscrapers and pavements! Holy the cafeterias filled with millions! Holy the mysterious rivers of tears under the streets! (21) Identical raw materials are presented in both cases (skyscrapers, pavement), but the substitution of the words provides two very different perspectives; one of ugliness and one of the understanding of the holiness in everything.

In the footnote of “Howl” that provides a thematic groundwork for the poem are time and religion. Time is presented as the main difference between the two struggling realms of existence in the poem. The “hipsters” time is eternal, not the chronological time of real-world existence. During their journey toward timelessness, the “hipsters,” “threw their watches off

the roof to cast their ballot for Eternity outside of Time, & alarm clocks fell on their heads every day for the next decade" (13). In pursuing "timelessness" the "hipsters" are punished by "Time." On the other hand, there is the destructive time which destroys the "mad generation." Time, therefore, becomes a symbol of two separate realms of existence: the "square" reads time by a clock while the "hipster" reads the holy "clocks in space" which tell him that time does not matter -- that truth is timeless.

The poem reads at times like scripture, with words like "blessed" used repeatedly. Other times, the religion of the poem is internal. Kenneth Rexroth states:

That the writing is "prophetic." "There are prophets of the Bible," "which it greatly resembles in purpose and in language and in subject matter . . . The theme is the denunciation of evil and a pointing out of the way out, so to speak" (68).

Another underlying religious theme is that of persecution, such as that of those "who lit cigarettes in boxcars boxcars boxcars racketing through snow toward lonesome farms in the grandfather night" (11), and those "who were burned alive in their innocent flannel suits on Madison Avenue amid blasts of leaden verse . . . or were run down by the drunken taxicabs of Absolute Reality" (14). These themes of time and religion give the poem an eternal and prophetic quality that has remained unrivaled in modern poetry. In *The Norton Anthology of Modern Poetry*, Richard Ellmann and Robert O'clair write:

In the later sixties Ginsberg became a vivid presence in American life, his face was familiar to those who had never read a line of poetry, and increasingly his poems were lost in a large general public impression. He has sometimes spoken of his poems rather dismissively as by-product of spiritual quest (1210).

This examination of "Howl's" history, structure, and themes brings to light the poem's ultimate importance to the history of American literature, society and spiritualism. The Beat Generation of writers offered the world a new attitude. They brought to society a

consciousness of a life worth living, a spiritual type of living. They offered a method of escape from the stultifying, unimaginative world we live in through the exploration of one's intellect. Allen Ginsberg's "Howl" does all of these things and more in an unforgettable, inspirational way. The poem points the way toward a new and better existence, chronicling the pilgrimage of the "mad generation" toward a reality that is timeless and placeless, holy and eternal.

The music of the hipsters and Negroes is jazz and has a mystical quality for Ginsberg, shown when he refers in "Howl" to: "the madman bum and angel beat in Time, unknown, yet putting down / here what might be left to say in time come after death, /and rose reincarnate in the ghostly clothes of jazz....." (lines 67, 34).

Ginsberg makes a direct link between a "madman bum" and "angel beat" and associates both with resurrection and rebirth. This juxtaposition of religion against those outside the American Dream is a recurring theme. The simple message being that everything can be Holy and therefore everyone should be included within the American Dream. "Howl" considers homosexuality, which in the nineteen-fifties was a serious crime in many states and considered a sin within the Christian faith.

Ginsberg included those labeled by Government as mad within the oppressed individuals he describes as "starving hysterical naked." Like Sal Paradise starved of spiritual meaning and, like Carl Solomon, driven "hysterical" by the society they inhabit, and also in the language and music they use to express it. For both Kerouac and Ginsberg Jazz is the music of "beat." The "best minds" are "floating across the tops of cities contemplating Jazz" as a mystic experience. They are "naked" to symbolize the rejection of sexual oppression. Nudity and innocence are associated, giving the beatific, inherent in the Beat's spirituality, a sexual and homosexual context. In this way Ginsberg identifies with the disaffected youth of America and the distortion of the American Dream. In "Howl" they are in search of drugs, from which they will gain a new spiritual insight, rather than be condemned and committed

as insane. They are also seeking treatment of their own, through self medication: “dragging themselves through the Negro streets at dawn looking for an angry fix,” (62, 3)

The spiritual reference is obvious here. They seek enlightenment. They reject contemporary mainstream American culture and yearn for a simpler more natural life but nature has been controlled to yield power and energy for a commercial elite who even mechanize the night. Ginsberg goes on to reject academia telling how the “best minds” in “Howl” :

‘passed through universities with radiant cool eyes hallucinating
Arkansas and Blake-light tragedy among the scholars of war,
who were expelled from the academies for crazy & publishing
obscene odes on the windows of the skull,’ (62, 12)

“Howl” focuses on Carl Solomon: the narrator is “with him.” This repeated chant of “I’m with you in Rockland” gives the poem a hymn like structure and the line length and repetition add to the idea of a chant. At the end of part three the poem sees hope for the American Dream. It states, referring to Carl Solomon that:

I’m with you in Rockland
in my dreams you walk dripping from a sea-
journey on the highway across America in tears
to the door of my cottage in the Western night, (line 113)

The last three lines of “Howl” attempt to reclaim ownership of the “American Dream.” In the narrators “dreams” Carl Solomon, a victim of psychiatric oppression, is able to cross America freely and express his emotions “in tears” without fear of the “Western night.”

Finally, “Howl” is a long, free-verse poem, reminiscent of Walt Whitman and influenced by the American Transcendentalists. It exemplifies Ginsberg's poetics of spontaneous composition with attention paid to the natural wanderings of the mind and the

rhythms of breathing. From the beginning, the work was designated to be read aloud. “Howl” became one of the symbols of the liberation of American culture in the 1950s from an academic formalism and political conservatism. Influenced by the mysticism and poetics of Blake, “Howl” celebrated and lamented with *Old Testament* rhythms the casualties of capitalism and consumer society, and in particular the lives of bohemians, his friends. The final part, “Footnote to Howl” is a hymn of praise: because of human love, the world is holy, despite the nightmare.

CHAPTER - 4

Conclusion

Spiritual Outlook in “Howl”

Spiritualism is a way of life which we all abide by out of choice. Being spiritual is not just about going to Church and worshipping God, it is about being loving, empathetic and caring, not only towards others but also towards yourself. It is true there are Spiritual Churches where you can worship your God or whatever you wish to know him/her/it as, but you don't have to go to church to be a spiritual person or to worship/praise your God. Real spiritualism is deeper than any religious philosophy and can not function with religions. Spiritualism is not the quest for self centered hidden truths, it empowers the individual and sees things equally and equitably. Real Spiritualism is not purely a philosophy but teaching too. Its quest is truths that come from honesty, understand ourselves and accept ourselves. It all comes from deep within one. From the inside a condition of spiritual awareness appears as a divine light is spiritual illumination.

The literary artist Allen Ginsberg, an iconoclast in both his politically charged writing and unconventional lifestyle, epitomized the anti-establishment "Beat" movement of the 1950s and 1960s. In the midst of a generation shaped by the aftermath of the Holocaust and the atomic bomb, mass conformity, and government censorship of personal liberties and civil rights, Ginsberg became a popular voice of artistic defiance. In American popular and academic culture, Ginsberg's influence as a poet, musician, artist, professor, and agitator has continued to grow even after his death. Bearing unofficial titles such as the "father of the Beat Generation," the "prophet of the 1960s," and the "guru of the counterculture movement," Ginsberg remains a cultural icon of one of America's most socially and politically turbulent eras.

Ginsberg embraced Eastern philosophies and African American culture, experimented with various drugs, used the raw materials of life as the basis for his art, and subverted

numerous societal and middle-class conventions in order to achieve spiritual liberation. The opening lines of Ginsberg's "Howl," the poetic manifesto of Beat attitudes and Ginsberg's most widely known work, exemplifies the gritty nature of his poetry. Because of its graphic sexual references, "Howl," became the subject of a 1957 obscenity case that resulted in a landmark acquittal of the literary world.

"Howl" is a long, free-verse poem, reminiscent of Walt Whitman and influenced by the American Transcendentalists. It exemplifies Ginsberg's poetics of spontaneous composition with attention paid to the natural wanderings of the mind and the rhythms of breathing. "Howl," became one of the symbols of the liberation of American culture in the 1950s from an academic formalism and political conservatism. Influenced by the mysticism and poetics of Blake, "Howl," celebrated and lamented with *Old Testament* rhythms the casualties of capitalism and consumer society, and in particular the lives of bohemians, his friends. The final part, "Footnote to Howl" is a hymn of praise: because of human love, the world is holy, everything is holy.

'Holy' is belonging to or derived from or associated with a divine power. Ginsberg's extreme use of the word holy is not to support the common view of 'holy' but rather emphasize its versatility. 'Holy' is whatever this counterculture or any other counterculture or any other person lives for, whether they survive by feeding off of the mere search for the "next plane of existence," whether their passion of the moment is fighting against something that America has done that has angered them. They define 'holy' to fit their lifestyle. Biblically, 'the world is holy', needless to say the million other things Ginsberg deems as holy, and he throws out such opposite concepts as being holy to prove his point further that 'holy' is what a person makes it. He respects all his friends who did so, who loves all humanity, humanity which serves human impulses from the point of view of spiritualism, as well as all of the other participating counterculture.

Ginsberg uses religious language because his lifestyle, the beat lifestyle, became a religion to those involved. Some of the images Ginsberg describes seem either like a great spiritual vision or a crazy drugged hallucination. Ginsberg's use of religious imagery was very effective and powerful. Particularly in the second part when he keeps using the word 'Moloch!' A 'Moloch' is a deity whose worship is marked by the sacrifice of children by their parents. Ginsberg often juxtaposes spiritual symbols and earthly, sometimes even vile, ones. Sometimes he speaks irreverently of religious icons: 'hopeless cathedrals' meat for the Synagogue cast on the pavement, but more often he elevates unlikely images like 'Zen New Jersey' and 'Harlem crowned in flame.' The overall tone of the poem implies disillusionment with traditional religious values: for example, Ginsberg's heroes pray for each other's salvation and spiritual goal. Ginsberg was always interested in his Jewish roots and in other concepts of spiritual transcendence.

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