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**WHY WERE THE PEOPLE ANGRY?
ANGRY YOUNG MEN AND BEATS**

Diplomová práce

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Prohlašuji, že jsem diplomovou práci vypracovala samostatně s použitím jen uvedené literatury a internetových zdrojů.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis deals with the situation in post-war Britain and its reflection in literary works of the group of writers commonly referred to as „Angry Young Men“. Emphasis is put on the society, its problems and disappointments. Several works are analysed to find the reasons for anger within the society. The thesis also investigates the situation in the United States of America and its influence on the writers of the literary movement called Beat Generation. The philosophy behind the Beat Generation is explained in order to understand their reasons for their revolt.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis concentrates on literary works of Angry Young Men in Britain and the Beat Generation in the United States of America. Societies in both countries underwent many changes in the post-war era and these changes are examined with regards to their influence on literary works at that period of time. People in both countries were angry but the reasons were not quite the same. This work explains political situation and social issues that had a great impact on writers on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.

People had reasons to be angry and this anger is expressed in literary works of both literary movements - Angry Young Men and the Beat Generation. The authors' anger is reflected in their works as a reaction to the problems at that time's society.

This work describes the historical background in both countries with emphasis on social and political issues. The reasons for anger within the society are investigated. The thesis lists the main personalities of Angry Young Men and the Beat Generation and their most influential works. Both literary movements are compared to find similarities and differences. They both show the discontent about life and political situation. This thesis concentrates on selected authors and their works.

This thesis concentrates on detailed analyses of selected works and their main characters. Angry Young Men are represented by John Osborne and his play *Look Back in Anger* (1956) and by Kingsley Amis and his novel *Lucky Jim* (1954). Jack Kerouac's novel *On the Road* (1957) and Allen Ginsberg's poem *Howl* (1955) were selected to represent the Beat Generation. Interpretation of these works was made to identify the reasons for anger amongst the people.

The aim of this work is to identify the reasons for anger within British and American society and its manifestation in selected literary works. The aim is to show how the sense of anger and revolt is expressed in literary works of selected authors of both literary movements.

1. Post-war Britain

The first chapter of this work will describe the situation in Britain in the 1950s. To understand the Angry Young Men, it is necessary to describe the situation in post-war Britain. Social and political issues will be discussed in this chapter. Angry Young Men ruled the 1950s decade which was the time after the Second World War. The after-war period was not an easy time, since the war had a great impact on British society. There is no doubt the war changed the life not only in Britain but in the whole Europe.

1.1 Historical background

The period after the Second World War was full of disappointments but also full of hope for better future. It was obvious there was a need for political, social and economic changes (McDowall, 1997, p. 168).

There was an apparent need to accommodate to new pressures and changes. Enthusiasm from the victory in the war was soon replaced by dissatisfaction with the cost-cutting economy of the post-war era. Britain had to deal with its new place in the world. It became a post-imperial power with second-class importance. This fact was successfully masked by the prosperity of 1950s. It was the time of cars, televisions, growing economic prospects and other conveniences of consumer society (Barnard, 1997, p. 215).

After the Allies' victory in the Second World War, Europe was left divided into two parts: the eastern part under the communist Soviet rule and the western capitalist part under the United States' influence. Britain was fearful of Soviet intentions but also felt being under pressure by the US power. Britain's task was to find its role in a newly arranged Europe. The country still felt as a world power, mainly due to its technical advancements during the 1950s. The country was very active in space research, nuclear weapons production and ballistic missiles design (McDowall, 1997, p. 168).

Judt (2008, p. 113) adds that the plan to develop and produce nuclear weapons was started in January 1947 in Britain.

Despite the technical advancements, Britain was left weakened and financially drained after the war. The British army had to be reduced from 5,5 million soldiers in 1945 to only 1,1 million soldiers in 1947. Also the British navy had to reduce its training due to the high cost of fuel in 1947. It was becoming harder and harder to maintain the British empire with all its colonies. World War II had a direct impact on the collapse of the empire. The severe defeats in Europe and Asia during the war had an influence on the country's financial and economic independence. Historians consider the first eighty years of the last century as the years of the downfall for Britain. Britain lost a lot of its power and was no longer the world's economic power (Judt, 2008, p. 112).

Most of the countries of The British Empire gained independence. In every country, the ritual was the same. The British flag was pulled down while the British anthem was playing. Then a new national flag was pulled up and an anthem of a new country was playing. The fall of The British Empire is considered as the most important social and political change in post-war Britain (Hilský, 1992, p. 13).

The weakening of Britain's international power became obvious in 1956 when Egypt wanted to take over the Suez Canal. British troops along with France and Israel attacked Egypt, but were forced by the US to withdraw. The canal was then nationalized by Egypt (McDowall, 1997, p. 169).

May (2010, p. 7) points out that the Suez Canal had been under British control for almost one hundred years. The place was a convenient access point to colonies in the Far East, India and Australia.

The USA's Marshall Plan, also known as the European Recovery Program, was designed to help Europe, including Britain, to rebuild its destroyed cities and to help the economy. The result was Britain in debt, both financially and politically, to the USA (May, 2010, p. 7).

The purpose was to help the European countries rebuild their economies and to enable the countries to trade with each other. The US accounted for 50% of the world's production and wanted to find markets for their products (Elliott, 2015).

1.2 Social situation

The social situation in post-war Britain was not an easy one. There were great changes in social and cultural conditions in Britain after the war. The British population was full of hope and expectations. Some of these expectations and prospects for better future stayed unfulfilled as will be described in this chapter.

The Education Act in 1944 provided grants for a limited number of working class at universities (Holá, Ondryášová, 1997, p. 107).

The introduction of the Welfare State gave Britain the National Health Service, considered as the first social security. A huge expansion of secondary and tertiary education was apparent. Britain in the 1950s was viewed as prosperous due to its baby boom and its desire for economic recovery. Production of cheap mass-produced goods was on the rise (May, 2010, p. 9).

The National Health Service Act of 1946 guaranteed that free medical treatment should be available for everyone (Sanders, 2001, p. 584).

Head (2002, p. 49) claims that the class perception changed after the World War II. All social classes had to face the crisis after the war. All classes wanted to share the prosperity of the 1950s era. People were hoping for better future and were in favour of the Labour party. The party seemed promising as they wanted more social security and employment for all

British citizens. Post-war Labour government favoured the working class and concentrated its work towards economic prosperity of the working class. The Labour party was formed in 1918 and its main goal was the common ownership of the means of production. The Labour party was therefore in conflict with the Conservatives, the party of capitalism. Class conflict was the centre of economic and social debates. Social levelling became prominent as the differences between classes were less obvious, resulting in the expansion of wide middlebrow culture.

A new „Welfare State“ was born when the Labour government won the elections in 1945. Many sectors of economy were nationalized. Britain passed through a quiet social revolution, shifting of social powers and political values in the process. After the war, there was a great sense of austerity. There was a shortage of coal, steel, food and housing. Britain was losing its economic power and its imperial role (Bradbury, 1994, p. 275).

The British people were against the old system and wanted to change things for the better. They saw their hope in the Labour party. The rigid class system was challenged as the social reform was on its way due to the Labour party election. The changes done by the party provided equal rights to everybody. All citizens could study and get health care. The Welfare state promised security for all people, including the poor. The government promised to provide all basic living needs, such as well-paid jobs, education, health care and insurance coverage. Several new „red-brick“ universities were created for the working-class students. Everything seemed to be very promising and optimistic for the working class.

But the plan did not work out. The social programs were too costly and Britain's economy struggled. The government was unable to keep all their promises and as a result, people felt disappointed and hopeless. Although the economy improved in the 1950s, strong class divisions remained. A new class of educated proletariat graduated from universities but had no opportunities to get a decent job. The people were only more aware of the class system

than before. The wide gap between the working and upper class remained. They felt oppressed by the system with no idea how to improve the situation. After the failure of the Labour party, the Conservative party was elected in 1951 and had their power back (Roundabouttheatre, 2012).

Hilský (1992, p. 7) calls the 1950s as the age of stability and prosperity. The newly elected Conservative party stayed in power until 1964 and their Welfare State program was not that much different from the Labour party's program. It seemed that unemployment, poverty and social conflicts were all a thing of the past. Refrigerators, televisions, washing machines and cars became social symbols of a new consumer society, where the middle class was much better off than before the World War II.

2 Angry Young Men

This chapter will give a description of a group of authors referred to as the „Angry Young Men“. A new generation of young writers appeared on the scene in 1950s Britain. The 1950s decade is remembered as the angry decade. The most famous of them were novelists John Braine, John Wain and Kingsley Amis and play-wright John Osborne. Most of them were supporters of the Labour government. They came from middle or lower social class and many of them worked as university teachers (Holá, Ondryášová, 1997, p. 107).

Before this time, majority of writers were from middle or upper class and had a university education (Wilson, 2007, p. 18).

Barnard (1997, p. 222) adds that this new generation of writers appeared on the scene in the mid 1950s and they showed their dissatisfaction with current social hierarchy. The authors focused their attention towards lower social classes and gave this lower class a fresh image. They wanted to make novel a popular genre again. The popularity of the novel was closely connected with its comprehensibility. The novel was supposed to be read by everyone and not

just by a small group of educated intellectuals. They wanted to write the truth about everyday life and to address a wide audience from all social classes.

They opposed the intellectual experimental modernist prose and preferred traditional narrative style. The authors were very critical of influential and powerful personalities (Holá, Ondryášová, 1997, p. 107).

Wilson (2007, p. 19) claims that the movement of the Angry Young Men was based on a real protest against the establishment and they really wanted to get things done and change the situation.

The term „angry young man“ was first used in reference to John Osborne after his play *Look Back in Anger* was produced in 1956 (May, 2010, p. 13).

Barnard (1997, p. 222) adds that the term was used by the journalists and not by the authors themselves.

Some of the authors of the generation were educated at the post-war red-brick universities at the state's expense but a few of them studied at Oxford. What they all had in common was their hatred of the British class system and its traditional families. Their writings expressed anger and disappointment about the post-war reforms done by the Labour party. Their aspirations for a class change were not fulfilled. They despised the persistence of class distinctions and disliked anything they considered highbrow (Britannica, 1998).

Hilský (1992, p. 7) describes the mid 1950s as the „new wave“ for the British novel. Many of the authors publish their first work between 1953 and 1957. These authors were John Wain, Kingsley Amis, John Braine, Iris Murdoch and William Golding amongst others. Their works clearly reflect the mood of the decade. Their writings reflected changes in social establishment of the British intelligence. The most significant change was that literature was no longer a domain of the higher class.

A new type of the main character was introduced in their work. This new hero was known as an anti-hero. A typical anti-hero comes from a lower working class, feels disillusioned and discontented about the society. The anti-hero is opposed to the current establishment and is struggling and trying very hard to get a respectable position in the society (Holá, Ondryášová, 1997, p. 107).

A typical character comes from a lower-middle class but gets married to a sexually attractive girl from a higher class. In this way the men feel they move up the social ladder. Erotic and social status is joined into one status. In this way the higher social status is also erotically attractive. Compromise and conformity are typical traits of the main character, which is a major difference from characters of the Beat Generation as will be discussed later in this work. Angry speech of an anti-hero is very critical of social hypocrisy and snobbery but it only gives the impression of radicalism. In reality, the character wants to be a part of the post-war welfare state. On the other hand, the Beat characters were considered non-conformist and did not want to be a part of the society (Hilský, 1992, p. 7).

Angry Young Men opposed the establishment although they were involved with the establishment in a sort of a symbiosis. They only seem to be beating against the door but in reality they do not want to destroy the door, they want to be let in (Ford, 1961, p. 489).

2.1 John Osborne (1929 - 1994)

John Osborne was one of the most famous personalities in his time. He resented the English establishment, he was educated at public schools, and he opposed the hypocrisy of church and state (Wagner, 2010, p. 165).

John Osborne's play *Look Back in Anger* (1956) made him famous. His new type of hero became known as „the angry young man“. Osborne made a great impact on 20th century drama and his influence was felt for many years to come. Osborne's hero lived in anger and

was struggling against the society and its pressures. His later plays *Luther* (1961) and *A Patriot for Me* (1965) are set in different time and place but both plays still portray the main hero as somebody who is fighting against the society and who does not fit into the society. His plays give an impression that the world used to be a better place before than it is now (Thornley, Roberts, 1990, p. 178).

Osborne's full biography can be viewed in Appendix 1.

2.1.1 *Look Back in Anger*

The drama *Look Back in Anger* first premiered in The Royal Court Theatre in London in 1956 and was considered as the beginning of a new era for the British drama. The play was produced by English Stage Company. The company was financially supported by the government and so young playwrights had opportunity to produce their plays (Holá, Ondryášová, 1997, p. 134).

The performance of the play *Look Back in Anger* is viewed as the beginning of modern drama. It was considered as a turning point in British drama due to its topic, which was political and social situation of its time. The characters came from a lower and working class. The setting was a very realistic everyday scene. The kitchen in Osborne's play replaced usual living rooms, drawing rooms or country houses common in plays before this time. The kitchen was chosen to represent a real life setting of younger working-class generation after the World War II. The play was mostly appealing to a younger audience under the age of thirty because it was the young people who mostly felt the frustration by the political and social situation. The play was well received by critics and made Osborne an internationally recognised author (May, 2010, p. 124).

The play was labelled as the „kitchen sink drama“, since it portrayed working class or lower middle class and emphasised domestic realism. The plays of this type were written as a

protest against the drawing-room comedies and middle-class dramas that dominated the theatre scene before the 1950s. The conventional characters of the middle-class drama were considered as superficial and unreal (Wagner, 2010, p. 165).

The drawing-room plays were still fashionable and focused on the upper class. But Osborne's drama was completely different. It captured the anger and frustration of the younger generation in the 1950s. The play challenged the social and political conventions of the time (Roundabouttheatre, 2012).

By producing his play by the English Stage Company, Osborne made the company recognised and famous and he proved he was able to put contemporary Britain on stage. Osborne wanted to escape from his lower middle-class bitterness. He described his plays as lessons in feeling (The Guardian, 2014).

Barnard (1997, p. 206) calls the drama a symbol of the young generation. He sees the play as an awakening of the theatre life. He classifies the drama as the kitchen realism. This label was coined by the journalists and was not liked by John Osborne. In reality, the realism is exaggerated. The play is more polemic than realistic. The critics could try to convince themselves that the country was full of unsatisfied university graduates selling sweets but this was not the case. The mastery of the play lies in bitter tirades accentuated by playful or hysterical undertone.

The main character of the play is Jimmy Porter who is a typical anti-hero. He is opposed to the establishment and is full of anger and disillusionment towards the society at the time. He was viewed as the first non-middle class anti-establishment character in modern British drama. Jimmy is of working-class origin but has a university education. Even though he has a university degree, he works as a sweets seller. He is angry at the society but also at himself due to his inability to make any positive change in his life. Jimmy is portrayed as a very egoistic and neurotic person which is reflected in his relationship with his wife. He expresses

his anger towards his wife Alison who comes from a higher social class. She is a very passive and submissive woman and is despised by Jimmy (Holá, Ondryášová, 1997, p. 134).

Jimmy feels misunderstood, unsuccessful, underemployed and overeducated. He is a very bitter person and resentful of his wife's upbringing. He tears their relationship apart eventually (Cunningham, 2015).

Jimmy's speech is targeted at provincial university graduates who make their living by unperspective badly-paid dead-end jobs. He expressed their dissatisfaction with unfulfilled emotional life and their anger towards the society. He also described the confusion about life of young men and women in the 1950s (Barnard, 1997, p. 207).

Jimmy uses his wife Alison as a hostage in his private class war because her father is a former colonel, meaning he comes from an upper class. Jimmy's ambivalent emotional attitude is complicated by his secret admiration of Alison's father. Relationships between men are viewed more positively than relationships between men and women. This aspect is obvious in the whole drama (Hilský, 1992, p. 16).

Hilský (1992, p. 7) adds that the main hero is an individualistic intellectual who is dissatisfied with the post-war British society. This character does not like his role in the society. He actually hates the role which was given to him by the society.

Barnard (1997, p. 222) describes Jimmy Porter as the only angry young man. Anger was Jimmy's life philosophy.

2.1.2 Analysis of *Look Back in Anger*

The main characters are Jimmy Porter, his wife Alison Porter, Jimmy's friend Cliff Lewis, Alison's friend Helena Charles and Alison's father Colonel Redfern. Other characters are mentioned throughout the play, such as Alison's mother and Alison's brother Nigel. The whole story takes place in the 1950s in Porters' small apartment. Cliff is living with them.

2.1.2.1 Act I

One Sunday afternoon, Jimmy, Cliff and Alison are at home in their small one-room flat. Jimmy is reading a newspaper and Alison is ironing, wearing Jimmy's old shirt. Jimmy talks to Cliff.

JIMMY: Well, you are ignorant. You're just a peasant. (To Alison) What about you? You're not a peasant are you? (*Look Back in Anger*, p. 8)

Jimmy is calling his friend Cliff a peasant, meaning Cliff is of a low-class origin. At the same time he asks his wife Alison the same question. This is just a rhetorical question. Jimmy knows very well his wife is not a peasant. Then Cliff takes the newspaper and reads.

JIMMY: Why do you bother? You can't understand a word of it. You're too ignorant.

CLIFF: Yes, and uneducated. Now shut up, will you?

JIMMY: Why don't you get my wife to explain it to you? She's educated. (To her) That's right, isn't it? (p. 9)

Jimmy is again hinting at Cliff's origin. Even though Jimmy is of working-class origin, he managed to study at the university and was able to get a university degree. Jimmy calls his friend ignorant and he emphasises how educated his wife is. Jimmy is also constantly verbally insulting his wife with remarks, such as "you can talk, can't you?" (p. 8) or "she hasn't had a thought for years" (p. 10). It is very obvious that Jimmy despises his wife and is trying to humiliate her at every possible occasion. In every situation, he has a rude remark to say. Their marriage is one of a love-hate relationship. There is an obvious contrast between Jimmy's long angry monologues and Alison's silence. Jimmy is trying to provoke her to some action. He wants to see some sign of passion from her and wants to get a feeling she is a real human being. Jimmy's long monologues demonstrate Osborne's art of dramatic language. His rhetorical mastery draws a lot of attention which is exactly what Jimmy longs for.

Lack of communication between the two is just one of their problems. Alison suffers her silent pain, unable to defend herself. Another issue they are dealing with is their class difference. He feels inferior due to his origin and constantly insults Alison because of her upper-class background. Even though she comes from an upper-class family, she is willing to accept a role of a working-class housewife. She has given up all advantages a woman of her upbringing could have.

Cliff, on the other hand, is always defending Alison: "Leave her alone, I said." (p. 9), or "Don't take any notice of him. He's being offensive. And it's so easy for him." (p. 16). Cliff is a working-class Welshman and he is a very pleasant person. There is a strange relationship between him and Alison, it is sort of love but without any physical aspects. Cliff does not approve of Jimmy's behaviour towards his wife and tries to make her feel better. Alison is a very quiet and passive woman and does not seem to be able to defend herself.

Jimmy expresses his anger not only towards his wife but also to his own life: "God, how I hate Sundays! It's always so depressing, always the same. We never seem to get any further, do we?" (p. 17). It is clear how miserable his life is. Jimmy's life is moving nowhere. He is stuck in the same place Sunday after Sunday. He is unable to make any positive change in his life. Life is just passing him by and it is going nowhere. Jimmy continues: "Damn you, damn both of you, damn them all." (p. 17). To make things even worse, Jimmy talks about his former mistress Madeline: "With her, it was simply the delight of being awake, and watching.", "Just to be with her was an adventure." (p. 24). On the other hand, Jimmy considers Alison to be emotionless, dull and without her own opinion: "even my wife is moved" (p. 13), "She's a great one for getting used to things." (p. 19), "Nothing I could do would provoke her." (p. 25), "All this time, I have been married to this woman, this monument to non-attachment." (p. 29). Alison does not argue with him and just keeps on ironing. She really seems to be phlegmatic and apathetic. She simply does not want to fuel his

anger even more by arguing with him. He finds a perfect word in a dictionary that sums her up.

JIMMY: Here it is I quote: Pusillanimous. Adjective Wanting of firmness of mind, of small courage, having a little mind, mean spirited, cowardly, timid of mind. From the Latin pusillus, very little, and animus, the mind. That's my wife! That's her, isn't it? (p. 30).

Alison is used to these carefully rehearsed attacks and does not seem to be affected by this. She just keeps ironing. She seems not to care but in reality she is a very smart woman and knows it is better to stay quiet. Jimmy is waiting for her reaction but she does not react in any way. If she started arguing Jimmy would feel victorious. Alison does not give him an opportunity to feel victorious. But his remarks are hurting her: "God help me, if he doesn't stop, I'll go out of my mind in a minute." (p. 29), "Look out, for heaven's sake! Oh, it's more like a zoo every day!" (p. 35), "Oh why don't you shut up, please!" (p. 52).

Jimmy is verbally attacking the members of Alison's family as well. His insults are aimed at Alison's parents and her brother Nigel. Jimmy describes Nigel and Alison as "sycophantic, phlegmatic and pusillanimous" (p. 28). There is also a sense of irony when Jimmy talks about Nigel as "the straight-backed, chinless wonder from Sandhurst" and "He'll end up in the Cabinet one day." (p. 26). Jimmy also hints at Nigel's high position: "His knowledge of life and ordinary human beings is so hazy" (p. 27). Jimmy talks about Alison's parents as well: "They'll kick you in the groin while you're handing your hat to the maid." (p. 29). Jimmy knows her parents do not like him either. Alison's mother calls Jimmy "utterly ruthless" (p. 62).

JIMMY: She gets letters. Letters from her mother, letters in which I'm not mentioned at all because my name is a dirty word. And what does she do? She

writes long letters back to Mummy, and never mentions me at all, because I'm just a dirty word to her too. (p. 51).

Jimmy feels he is just a piece of dirt to his wife and her family and is not worth writing about. He is angry that his wife does not write about him in her letters to her mother. He feels that he is not important to his wife. Alison's mother does not mention him in her letters and Jimmy feels she simply does not care about him since she does not even ask about him. He feels he is of low importance and is not worth mentioning in upper-class people's letters. Jimmy's insecurity is very obvious. He feels very insecure since he married a woman above his social class. And that is why he searches through her things to find the letters. He wants to know how she feels about him but there is no mention of him in her letters.

Cliff does not agree with Jimmy's behaviour but tries to defend him and explains why he behaves as he does. Cliff understands Jimmy in a way.

CLIFF: Well, I suppose he and I think the same about a lot of things, because we're alike in some ways. We both come from working people, if you like. Oh I know some of his mother's relatives are pretty posh, but he hates them as much as he hates yours. Don't quite know why. Anyway, he gets on with me because I'm common. Common as dirt, that's me. (p. 41).

Cliff and Jimmy are of the same origin. Unlike Alison, they both come from a working class background. Cliff explains that Jimmy hates Alison's parents and he attacks his wife due to her origin. At the same time, Cliff questions their marriage: "Why the hell she married you, I'll never know" (p. 42).

Alison's friend Helena is coming to town and Alison offers to her that she can stay in the same house. Jimmy is not too happy about it: "Did you tell her to bring her armour? Because she's going to need it!" (p. 52). Jimmy despises Helena: "One of her old friends. And one of

my natural enemies” (p. 49). Helena is from the upper class just like Alison and works as an actress.

2.1.2.2 Act II

It is Sunday two weeks later. Jimmy is playing a trumpet and Helena and Alison are preparing supper. Helena reacts to Jimmy’s trumpet: “It’s almost as if he wanted to kill someone with it. And me in particular. I’ve never seen such hatred in someone’s eyes before.” (p. 58). Jimmy hates Helena and she can feel it. Jimmy expressed his hatred for Helena in Act I when he found out she was coming for a visit. Helena is a well dressed woman of a middle-class origin. Her origin itself is enough for Jimmy to hate her. Helena does not like Jimmy either: “He’s really a savage, isn’t he?” (p. 66). She advises Alison: “Listen to me. You’ve got to fight him. Fight, or get out. Otherwise, he will kill you.” (p. 69).

Alison talks about her marriage to Jimmy. She explains Jimmy’s and his friend Hugh’s attitude towards her: “They both came to regard me as a sort of hostage from those sections of society they had declared war on.” (p. 62). Jimmy clearly expresses his hatred for Alison’s social class and uses Alison to let his steam off. He cannot punish the whole society but he can at least punish his wife whom he sees as the representative of the social class he hates so much. But at the same time, Jimmy and his friend Hugh used Alison to get into the higher class and to make contacts. Jimmy wanted to get into the higher class and wanted to feel like he belonged there. He seems to hate the social class he is part of.

ALISON: They started inviting themselves – through me – to people’s houses, friends of Nigel’s and mine, friends of Daddy’s, oh everyone. In my name, we’d gatecrash everywhere – cocktails, week-ends, even a couple of houseparties. (p. 63).

After this conversation, they sit at a table to have dinner. Jimmy starts his verbal attacks again: “Why is it that nobody knows how to treat the papers in this place?” (p. 70). He continues by addressing Cliff: “What do you want to read it for, anyway? You’ve no intellect, no curiosity.” and “What are you, you Welsh trash?” (p. 71). Jimmy insults Cliff again, hinting at his low origin and low intellect. He feels he is the only one in the household who can read the newspaper and who knows how to treat a newspaper. By constantly insulting Cliff he wants to show that he is better than his friend. Cliff does not want to argue and passively replies: “Right.” (p. 71).

He continues and this time he attacks Alison’s friends when he calls them “sycophantic, phlegmatic, and, of course, top of the bill – pusillanimous” (p. 72).

Alison’s parents did not approve of her marriage to Jimmy but she married him anyways. As a result her parents cut her off financially: “Mummy had made me sign everything over to her, in trust, when she knew I was really going to marry Jimmy.” (p. 63). This can be viewed also as Alison’s incomplete devotion to Jimmy. She did not want to sacrifice her family’s fortune for Jimmy. Alison explains to Helena: “They did just about everything they could think of to stop us.” (p. 66). Alison accuses Jimmy of spoiling her life:

ALISON: Oh yes, we all know what you did for me! You rescued me from the wicked clutches of my family, and all my friends! I’d still be rotting away at home, if you hadn’t ridden up on your charger, and carried me off! (p. 76).

There is a strong sense of anger in Alison’s speech. She gave up everything just to marry him. She lost her friends. She sacrificed everything to have this miserable life. Jimmy hates Alison’s mother when he says: “That old bitch should be dead!” (p. 78).

Helena says to Jimmy: “You think the world’s treated you pretty badly, don’t you?” (p. 80). Jimmy attacks Helena by the following question: “Helena, have you ever watched somebody die?” (p. 85). Her answer is: “No, I haven’t.” (p. 86). Then Jimmy starts his long

angry monologue explaining how his father died and how it affected him. He claims he was the only one who cared about his father's health. His father's death has deeply affected him. Jimmy was a small boy at that time and had a difficult time coping with the situation.

JIMMY: You see, I learnt at an early age what it was to be angry – angry and helpless. And I can never forget it. I knew more about love, betrayal and death, when I was ten years old than you will probably ever know all your life. (p. 88).

There is no reaction to his speech. Jimmy expects Alison to show some kind of sympathy and compassion but he does not say it directly. He thinks his wife should be supportive of him and express some grief for what has happened to him. He demands an answer: "Doesn't it matter to you – what people do to me?" (p. 88). He feels hurt because he has experienced loss, helplessness and loneliness. Jimmy has high expectations of Alison to the point that his demands are unrealistic. Alison has not experienced any of the pain Jimmy has. To understand him, he wishes she had a child and that she would lose the child. Only like that, she would know what it feels like to lose somebody. He is not aware of Alison's pregnancy and has no idea that his words will come true. Jimmy informs Alison that his friend's mother is dying and he wants to go see her. He expects Alison to join him but she shows no remorse or interest.

But nothing happens. Helena and Alison are getting ready to go to church. Jimmy gets even angrier and accuses Alison that she allows Helena to influence her: "You Judas! You phlegm! She's taking you with her, and you're so bloody feeble, you'll let her do it!" (p. 88). All Alison says is: "All I want is a little peace." (p. 90). He accuses Alison of being selfish and starts another angry monologue. He claims she has no emotion: "But that girl there can twist your arm off with her silence." (p. 90). He cries for attention but his wife is getting dressed for the church. He is angry due to the lack of communication between him and his

wife: “One of us is mean and stupid and crazy. Which is it? Is it me? Or is it her? Sitting there, putting on her shoes to go out with that -.” (p. 90). He is desperate for his wife’s attention but there is no reaction from her. She does not seem to care about his emotional pain. Her silence is making Jimmy even angrier as he is desperate for her reaction. But she just seems untouched.

Helena does not approve of Jimmy’s constant shouting at Alison: “He makes me want to claw his hair out by the roots.” (p. 91). She also attacks Cliff for being too passive and not doing anything to help the situation. She claims that all this time, he just sits there and does nothing: “What’s the matter with you? What sort of man are you?” (p. 92). As a reaction, Cliff defends himself by claiming he does the best he can in this “battlefield”, “plain hell” or “nut-house” (p. 92).

The next day, Alison’s father - Colonel Redfern - comes to their flat to help Alison pack her things. Colonel looks around and asks about Jimmy: “He really does hate us, doesn’t he?” Alison replies: “Oh yes – don’t have any doubts about that. He hates all of us.” (p. 99). By “all of us” she means not only her family but all people from her social class.

Alison leaves with her father and leaves a letter for Jimmy. Jimmy reads the letter and gets furious: “She has to make a polite, emotional mess out of it!” (p. 111). He is angry about the choice of the words she used in her letter: “deep, loving need”. He never believed she was capable of using such words.

Since Helena is the only one in the room, Jimmy expresses his anger about the situation towards her: “You’d better keep out of my way, if you don’t want your head kicked in.” (p. 111). As a reaction, Helena reveals to him that Alison is pregnant: “Doesn’t that mean anything? Even to you?” (p. 112). He angrily replies he is “not going to go soggy at the knees, and collapse with remorse” (p. 112). He has just returned from seeing his friend’s mother dying. After a short argument, Helena slaps his face and then they kiss.

This does not come as a surprise, there has always been a tension and attraction between Jimmy and Helena. Helena is described as follows: “Her sense of matriarchal authority makes most men who meet her anxious, not only to please but impress, as if she were the gracious representative of visiting royalty. In this case, the royalty of that middle-class womanhood, which is so eminently secure in its divine rights,” (p. 56). Jimmy talks about her as “her kind are everywhere, you can’t move for them. They’re a romantic lot.” (p. 84) and “a saint in Dior’s clothing” (p. 82) or “sacred cow” (p. 83). Helena is carefully and expensively dressed and her behaviour is one of strength and dignity. She is used to receiving respect and admiration. The stage notes reveal that “in Jimmy, as one would expect, she arouses all the rabble-rousing instincts of his spirit,” (p. 56). Jimmy secretly admires her strong personality, since she is able to defend herself against his verbal attacks.

2.1.2.3 Act III

It is Sunday several months later and Helena is still living there. Jimmy and Cliff are reading the Sunday newspaper and Helena is ironing wearing Jimmy’s old shirt just like Alison used to wear. Jimmy talks to Cliff and asks him to give him the newspaper: “Let’s have that paper, stupid!” (p. 121). Nothing has changed, Jimmy is still rude to his friend Cliff. He calls him “You rough bastard!”, “You’re a savage, a hooligan!” or “you idiot” (p. 128). Cliff tells him he is thinking of moving out and finding a nice girl to live with.

JIMMY: Can’t think who’d be stupid enough to team themselves up with you though. Perhaps Helena can think of somebody for you – one of her posh girl friends with lots of money, and no brains. (p. 130).

The passage shows that the situation has not changed since Alison left. Jimmy is insulting Helena the same way how he used to insult Alison. Jimmy’s life is still the same, he still reads the newspaper every Sunday, still argues with his woman and with Cliff. But Jimmy desires a

change and says to Helena: “If you’ll help me I’ll close that damned sweet-stall, and we’ll start everything from scratch. What do you say? We’ll get away from this place.” (p. 135).

Then suddenly Alison enters. Jimmy is playing the trumpet. Helena starts talking to Alison and finds out Alison has lost the baby. Helena decides she will leave Jimmy. Jimmy’s reaction to Alison’s loss is very cold and distant: “I don’t exactly relish the idea of anyone being ill, or in pain. It was my child too, you know. But it isn’t my first loss.” (p. 146). He reacts this way because he has experienced a loss before when his father died and later his friend’s mother. Alison was not supportive when he needed her so he does not show any compassion either. But now, since she had a miscarriage, she is able to understand Jimmy and his feelings. All of a sudden she seems more understanding and she has realised what suffering feels like.

ALISON: I never knew what it was like. I didn’t know it could be like that! I was in pain, and all I could think of was you, and what I’d lost. I thought: if only - if only he could see me now, so stupid, and ugly and ridiculous. This is what he’s been longing for me to feel. (p. 150).

In her speech, there is a sense of pain and suffering. She also feels remorse that she has not been there for him when he needed her support and compassion. Jimmy also reminds her of the time when his friend’s mother died: “You never even sent any flowers to the funeral. Not a little bunch of flowers. You had to deny me that too, didn’t you?” (p. 146). Alison realises what she did wrong in their relationship: “I was wrong! I don’t want to be neutral, I don’t want to be a saint. I want to be a lost cause, I want to be corrupt and futile!” (p. 149). At the end of the play, it is not obvious whether Alison stays with Jimmy or not. What is obvious is Alison’s transformation from an emotionless being to a woman who is able to feel pain and who finally understands her husband. Jimmy has always wanted her to show some enthusiasm and to act like she is alive.

2.2 Kingsley Amis (1922 - 1995)

Another well known personality of 1950s Britain was Kingsley Amis. He was a novelist, critic and a poet, born in South London and educated at the City of London School and St. John's College, Oxford. He worked as a teacher in Swansea and then at Cambridge. Amis served as a lieutenant in the Royal Corps of Signals during the World War II. He wrote over twenty novels, three collections of poetry, short stories and scripts for radio and television. (Britannica, 2012).

He published several books of poetry, such as *Bright November* (1947) and *A Frame of Mind* (1953). He became famous for his novel *Lucky Jim* (1954) but he wrote many other novels. Well known Amis' novels are *That Uncertain Feeling* (1955), *Take a Girl Like You* (1960) or *I Like It Here* (1958) (Drabble, 2000, p. 24).

He was considered a moral satirist. He wrote about human relations in society in a straightforward style. He also wrote radio plays, television scripts, literary criticism, restaurant reviews and many other kinds of writing. He was able to turn quite unexceptional characters and situations into something much larger and memorable (*The New York Times*, 1995).

Amis's full biography can be viewed in Appendix 2.

2.2.1 *Lucky Jim*

Amis's best known novel *Lucky Jim* (1954) is one of the most important works of the 1950s and tells a story about a young university teacher Jim Dixon who wants to break the rules of his social class by connecting with the working class. He is making contacts with characters outside his social class and is looking for an experience of life different from his social background. He feels that working-class people have stronger and deeper feelings and

can enjoy life more than people around him. Even though Jim teaches at a university, he hates the pretensions of academic life (Thornley, Roberts, 1990, p. 154).

Jim became a very favourite character amongst the middle-class intellectuals in Britain. He was admired for fighting pretentiousness and phoney dilettantism while trying to make a good living at the same time (Wagner, 2010, p. 205).

Lucky Jim was Amis's first novel. Amis used his own experience as a university teacher. He used to teach at Swansea in Wales. The main character of the novel is Jim Dixon who is a university teacher of medieval history. Jim gets dismissed from the university because of his parodies of all the eminent professors during his lecture. He meets a beautiful girl Christine and finds an employment in a rich aristocrat's house. In this novel, Amis shows his critical attitude towards snobbish society and hypocrisy (Holá, Ondryášová, 1997, p. 107).

The purpose of writing *Lucky Jim* was to attack and to make fun of the snobbish society, bourgeois careers and obtuse provincial institutions. The main character comes from the middle class himself but has become estranged from the middle class life. He shows his criticism of social and cultural hypocrisy. The tone of the book is anti-official in a sense that the author attacks those who have power, who have high social status and those who have the power to influence the whole nation by their opinions. Jim Dixon has to be able to get along with his professor who he despises and he has to pretend he is writing his scientific work but he is not able to fulfil any of these tasks (Barnard, 1997, p. 223).

Jim Dixon was also labelled as the angry young man, just like Osborne's Jimmy Porter. The term was first used in *The Times* on 26. May 1956 in reference to both anti-heroes mentioned above. The term was very catchy and drew a lot of attention, even though both authors were opposed to using it (Hilský, 1992, p. 10).

Allsop (in Ford, 1961, p. 487), in his book *The Angry Decade*, claims that the label „angry young men“ is not quite accurate since the word „anger“ is a misnomer. He suggests the

word „dissentience“ as a better reflection of the 1950s spirit. He claims the meaning better expresses the disagreement of the authors with the establishment.

2.2.2. Analysis of *Lucky Jim*

An introduction to the novel, written by David Lodge, describes *Lucky Jim* as “a classic comic novel, a seminal campus novel and a novel which expressed the mood of those who came of age in the 1950s” (p. v).

The story concentrates on social reality and takes place at a provincial English university. The first chapter introduces the main characters of the novel. Jim Dixon, a junior teacher in the history department, is “on the short side, fair and round-faced” (p. 8) and so far he has made a “bad impression” (p.16) in the College due to inflicting a “superficial wound” (p. 16) on the Professor of English. Jim is a “medievalist” (p. 33) and he has chosen the medieval study because it was “a soft option” (p. 33) and because “it looked better to seem interested in something specific” (p. 33). Jim does not particularly like the academic environment or his job, he feels “over-mastering, orgiastic boredom, and its companion, real hatred” (p. 85). Jim tends to drink a lot of alcohol on a regular basis to escape from all this misery. He is an outsider who does not fit into the university environment.

Another main character is Professor Welch, “tall and weedy, with limp whitening hair” (p. 8). Dixon calls Professor Welch a “cockchafer” (p. 86) and his nose “a large, open-pored tetrahedron” (p. 86). Professor Welch is the head of the History Department and is of a middle-class origin. Margaret Peel is also a teacher, she is “small, thin, and bespectacled, with bright make-up” (p. 18) who “had tried to kill herself with sleeping-pills” (p. 17).

Professor Welch and Dixon are talking about an article Dixon is supposed to publish soon. The article has a perfect title, “in that it crystallized the article’s niggling mindlessness, its funeral parade of yawn-enforcing facts, the pseudo-light it threw upon non-problems” (p. 14).

Jim simply elaborates on how stupid and useless his article really is. There is no point in publishing it but it is necessary for his career. The title is "*The Economic Influence of the Developments in Shipbuilding techniques, 1450 to 1485*" (p. 15). Amis is making fun of the university where lecturers spend a lot of time producing articles full of completely useless information. Jim gets a letter from a publisher who proposes he will publish the article "in due course" (p. 30). Jim feels that his article has "some merit after all" (p. 30). The letter is written on a piece of torn paper, the publisher is obviously "not too fussy about stationery" (p. 31). Jim is probably not worth receiving a letter on a decent paper from a respectable publisher.

Professor Welch tends to call Dixon not by his name but he calls him Faulkner (p. 16), showing Dixon that he is not really important, since the Professor cannot even remember his correct name. Dixon also feels the Professor is testing him to see whether he is "a fit person to teach in a university" (p. 24). The Professor treats him in a way to show that Jim is not really suitable to teach at the university.

While sitting in a bar with Margaret, Jim contemplates how much he has in common with the barmaid and "how much she'd like and have in common with him" (p. 25). He clearly identifies himself being close to the barmaid who is most likely of working-class origin.

Professor Welch invites Dixon to come to a party to his house "to lend a hand with something" (p. 17), meaning they are not on the same level, Jim would be just a helping hand at a party. The Professor does not see him as his equal. It can be assumed that Jim is of a lower class origin and has most likely studied at a red brick university. Getting an education was the only way how to improve his social standing. But the British society was so rigid that one was always viewed as a lower-class person no matter how educated the person was. For this reason, Jim can never be equal to Professor Welch even though they both have a university degree. Jim is not looking forward to the party, he expects "a mixture of predicted

boredom with unpredicted boredom” (p. 35). He feels the party will be full of superficiality and hypocrisy.

The professor has invited his son Bertrand to come to the party. When Jim sees Bertrand’s girl Christine, he feels stunned and anxious and “his diaphragm contracted with fright” (p. 39). “The sight of her seemed an irresistible attack on his own habits, standards and ambitions: something designed to put him in his place for good.” (p. 39). “His place” refers to his social status within the society and this status is completely different from Christine’s “place”. Women like Christine could only date men like Bertrand. Jim is very impressed by her but at the same time he is aware of the fact that she is not available to him due to their class difference. She possesses beauty and taste in clothing which are both considered as markers of high class. On the other hand, the Welches try very hard to look classy and throwing a lavish party is just one act to look that way.

BERTRAND: I am a painter. Not, alas, a painter of houses, or I should have been able to make my pile and retire by now. No no; I paint pictures. Not, alas again, pictures of trade unionists or town halls or naked women, or I should now be squatting on an even larger pile. (p. 41)

Bertrand implies that he is not just an ordinary painter, painting ordinary objects. In other words, he claims painting common things is below him and he is a serious painter.

“A maidservant was now collecting the used crockery, and the company was moving about.” (p. 45). The difference in social class is evident here. Since the Welches have a maidservant, they are obviously financially very well off. Mrs Welch also has “a good-size income of her own” (p. 66), even though it is not clearly stated what kind of work she does. Dixon suspects that Professor Welch “contrived to marry money” (p. 66). The professor most likely married his wife to climb up the social ladder.

Bertrand mentions that “the rich play an essential role in modern society” (p. 51). He believes that the rich “keep the arts going” (p. 51), in other words, the rich spend a lot of money supporting arts. He considers rich people to be much better because they are “charming” and “generous” (p. 52). What he does not realize is the fact that rich people are charming and generous because they have the luxury to be so.

Jim is really impressed by Christine, the symbol of high class. Even though she has a rather large appetite and “slightly irregular” (p. 71) front teeth, he realizes she is prettier than he has thought. She arouses a “mess of feelings in him: indignation, grief, resentment, peevishness, spite, and sterile anger, all the allotropes of pain” (p. 72).

They all attend the Summer Ball event, where Christine’s uncle Gore-Urquhart is first introduced. Dixon considers him “charming” (p. 105) and with “the most beautiful manners” (p. 105). He genuinely possesses refinement and does not need to pretend anything. It is a great difference from Bertrand, “the bearded monster” (p. 105). On the other hand, uncle’s suit was not “spectacularly faultless” (p. 109) and he had “a single black eyebrow running from temple to temple” (p. 109). Over all, he is a very down-to-earth person and does not mind staying “with the rubble” (p. 109). The rubble refers to the ordinary people. Amis clearly distinguishes between those who have class, those who do not and those who try very hard to pretend to look classy.

Christine “was looking her best” (p. 106), “fairly sophisticated” (p. 137) and “making everybody else look like an assemblage of granulated half-tones” (p. 107). When Jim asks her for a dance and she agrees, he feels “like a special agent, a picaroon, a Chicago war-lord, a hidalgo, an oil baron, a mohock” (p. 113). He really has to control himself not to break into “an imbecile smirk of excitement and pride” (p. 113). He admits: “She’s a bit out of my class.” (p. 124). He just cannot believe a girl like that is dancing with him. Jim takes Christine to the Welches’ house in a taxi and he kisses her when they enter the house. He compares this

experience to having “no charts for these waters” (p. 149). But experience proves that it is often “those without charts who got the furthest” (p. 149). It can be assumed that he has never been close to a girl like Christine. He considers the situation “the incredible finale to the Summer Ball” (p. 154).

Margaret gets really angry with him: “You don’t think she’d have you, do you? a shabby little provincial bore like you” (p. 158). She clearly brings up the social class difference between Christine and Jim. She claims he is not good enough for Christine and that he is way below her level. She also mentions that the Welches are “out for his blood” (p. 156).

Amis brings up a topic concerning the education system, especially the provincial universities. Entrance exams should be compulsory to keep out the ones who are not suitable for studies. He also criticizes the option to “lower the pass mark to twenty per cent and give you the quantity you want” (p. 170). The result would be more people passing the exams but the school would produce people who are not capable of doing much. The trouble is “having so many people here on Education Authority grants” (p. 170).

Mrs. Welch’s “attitude towards the Welfare State” (p. 176) clearly states she is against it, she claims it is unfair “if people have everything done for them ...” (p. 176). It is not fair if somebody gets a free education simply because they cannot afford it. She believes education is a privilege only for the rich and should not be freely available to everybody, as is expressed in her attitude towards “so-called freedom in education” (p. 176). She is not a supporter of the Education Act, discussed in chapter 1.2 of this work.

Jim regrets his parents did not have enough money to set him up for life: “The very thought of it was a torment” (p. 178). He wishes he could belong to a higher class because his life would be so much easier.

Bertrand calls Dixon “a lousy little philistine” (p. 184) to remind him of his inferior class status and he does not want people of Dixon’s sort to stand in his way. It is clear Bertrand

believes that Christine, and all women like her, are not suitable for Jim. Women like that are only for men of his status. He says: "I'm having Christine because it's my right" (p. 208). He does not believe that people of different class origin should mix. He actually tells Dixon to "keep off the grass" (p. 207). Jim calls Bertrand "a twister and a snob and a bully and a fool" (p. 208).

Jim starts having doubts about himself and Christine, he is worried they would not "be able to eat tea together the following afternoon" (p. 185). Jim questions the appropriateness of his desire for Christine. They discuss the topic and Christine suggests they both stay committed to their current partners. Jim feels "a sense of failure and general uselessness" (p. 203).

Jim is getting ready for his lecture which he sees as "a lot of boredom" (p. 215) and feels "rather drunk" (p. 221) before the lecture even begins. Bertrand, "that bearded slob" (p. 219), is there too, holding Christine's arm, "confident, proprietary, victorious" (p. 219). Dixon is supposed to start his lecture and the best he can think of is to imitate Professor Welch's "preludial blaring sound" (p. 222). Then, during his speech, he uses a lot of terms typical for the Professor's speech, such as "of course", "you see", "integration of social consciousness" and "identification of work with craft" (p. 223). First he speaks imitating the Professor, then the Principal, causing quite an uproar in the audience. After a while he quits imitating but it is obvious what "he thinks of his subject and the worth of the statements he is making" (p. 225). He speaks with "a sarcastic, wounding bitterness" (p. 226). According to Jim, "nobody outside a mad house", can take seriously a single phrase of "this conjectural, nugatory, deluded, tedious rubbish" (p. 226). He continues to change the way of his speech, he talks like "an unusually fanatical Nazi trooper" (p. 226), then he tries "an unnameable foreign accent" (p. 226) and raises his voice higher and higher towards the end.

The reaction of the audience is full of "shouts, whistles, and applause" (p. 226). The local worthies and the senior members of the staff are "staring at him with frozen astonishment and

protest” (p. 226). Jim realizes he is not “cut out for University teaching” (p. 229). The lecture costs him his job and he feels “almost free of care” (p. 232) and thinks it is nice “to have nothing he must do” (p. 233). Then Mr. Gore-Urquhart calls and offers him a job in London as his assistant, the same job Bertrand was hoping to get. Christine and Jim meet and she informs him that it is over between her and Bertrand and she is going back to London. Jim tells her about his new job. They most likely leave for London together but the book does not imply whether they will develop a serious relationship.

Amis, just like Osborne, concentrates on the topic of class difference between people. They both criticize the fact that if somebody is of a lower-class origin, he is looked down on throughout his whole life no matter how hard he tries to better himself. They both disagree with the society’s rigidity where there is not much freedom in social mobility. Amis and Osborne question the credibility and usefulness of education. Even a good education does not guarantee a good social status and a well-paid job.

3 The United States of America in the 1950s

The following chapter will discuss the situation in the United States of America in the 1950s. The philosophy behind the Beat Generation will be described and major authors mentioned. Just like in Britain, the World War II had an impact on the American society, even though the impact was quite different.

The United States experienced phenomenal economic growth after the World War II. It quickly became the world’s richest country. More Americans considered themselves as part of the middle class. Increased car production and a housing boom were apparent as more people could afford to spend money. Mortgages were easily affordable for returning servicemen. Major American corporations expanded and grew larger. Big enterprises developed holdings overseas, taking advantage of lower cost labour. Class distinctions began to fade as most

employed people held white-collar jobs, working as managers, teachers or salespersons. Lot of people were moving to big cities, to new suburbs, where they could find affordable housing. As the suburbs grew, businesses moved into the new areas. Televisions became a common item in the households. By the 1960 three-quarters of all families owned at least one. The television started to have a great impact on the society with its advertisements picturing happy families in nice houses, having a perfect life (Hamby, 2011, p. 268).

3.1 Historical background

The United States of America's position was strengthened by the World War II and America became a world power. The Marshall Plan was introduced to help Europe's reconstruction after the war. The plan was officially named the European Recovery Program and included financial support to help Western European economies to recover from the damages and costs caused by the World War II. The plan was named after George Marshall, who was the general of the army and later became the secretary of the state. The American government felt threatened by the atomic war and led the Cold War policy against the Soviet Union and its communist ideology. North Atlantic Treaty Organisation was established in 1949 and included the United States and eleven other countries. The communist threat was strongly felt within the society and senator Joseph McCarthy led a movement looking for anybody suspicious of having any sympathies for communism (Holá, Ondryášová, 1997, p. 205).

Huddleston (2012, p. 2) uses the term „Grand Inquisitor“ for McCarthy's role at that time and this period of time is also known as McCarthyism.

American soldiers were sent to fight in the Korean War and fifty thousand of them were killed. President Truman sent the troops to the war when South Korea was invaded by North Korea (Holá, Ondryášová, 1997, p. 205).

High (1986, p. 176) calls the after-war era an „Age of Anxiety“, since the politics could be characterized by two great fears. The first one was the fear of the Soviet Union bombs. There was a sense of uncertainty whether there would be a war with the Soviet Union. The second fear had its root in communism, which actually became a national sickness. Senator Joseph McCarthy often appeared on television informing the public that communism was destroying the nation. He focused his „witch hunts“ on communist intellectuals, writers and Hollywood figures. He destroyed many lives and careers of Americans who had actually nothing to do with communism.

3.2 Social situation

During the World War II, American writers were enthusiastic about the global battle to defeat fascism. Literature at that time was mostly about celebrating American democracy and belief in a better world. After the end of World War II in 1945, there was a sense of euphoria and liberation within the whole population. The troops came home and families were reunited again. However, this euphoria was short lived. A new era had begun. This new era was the Cold War. The writers reflected this mood shift in their writings (Raskin, 2004, p. 3).

General American population wanted an easy and comfortable life with all the good things life has to offer. They wanted secure jobs, happy marriages and families, well-deserved retirement and all kinds of consumer goods. The young people were expected to go to school, get a nice job, live a decent life, marry and have children. Conformity was the theme of the day. But some people felt this security and safety was very fragile and could be destroyed at any time. People were not really aware of their vulnerability (Huddleston, 2012, p. 2).

During the 1950s, there was a sense of stability, uniformity and conformity within the society. Men and women were forced into new employment patterns during the World War II, but after the war, they returned back to their traditional roles. Men were supposed to be the

breadwinners and women, even if they worked, had their place at home. But below this seemingly bland surface, part of American society felt rebellious. These were the writers referred to as the Beat Generation (Hamby, 2011, p. 270).

4 The Beat Generation

The Beat Generation emerged on the scene in 1950s decade. They met one another while studying at Columbia University. The most famous personalities of the Beat Generation were Allen Ginsberg, William Burroughs, Jack Kerouac and Gregory Corso. They considered themselves as pioneers and moved westwards to California, where Ginsberg met poet Lawrence Ferlinghetti and together they founded the City Light Press in San Francisco. It was named after Ferlinghetti's City Lights Bookstore (Lewicki, 1997, p. 87).

Allen Ginsberg actually met Jack Kerouac as early as in 1944 at Columbia University. Ginsberg had been suspended at that time and Kerouac had dropped out. For this reason they were both viewed as outcasts. They both came from middle-class backgrounds and were considered as the original Beats (Huddleston, 2012, p. 4).

The Beat Generation was first associated with New York, but attracted a considerable attention of the public after public reading appearances in the coffeehouses and colleges of San Francisco in 1956. These public readings were performed by Ginsberg, Kerouac, Gregory Corso along with Ferlinghetti and others (Gray, 2011, p. 611).

The poets of the Beat Generation were first connected with the avant-garde literary scene in New York but in the mid 1950s the main representatives moved to California where they attracted major attention. They quickly became part of a close community of avant-garde authors on the west coast (Flajšar, 2006, p. 75).

They were inspired by Oriental religions and were opposed to the establishment. They expressed the desire for individual freedom. They were also known for their drug use and free

sex. Their lifestyle can be characterized as a combination of jazz, drugs, sex, drinking, smoking, while enjoying their liberty and spontaneity (Holá, Ondryášová, 1997, p. 208).

Even though their revolt against provincial values and narrow-mindedness of the society can be considered as positive and progressive, their way of life cannot be so highly appreciated and celebrated. Their lifestyle was one of sexual promiscuity and drug tolerance. This deviant and unacceptable behaviour was criticised by literary establishment and cultural commentators. Norman Podhoretz, editor of influential magazine *Partisan Review*, considered the beat influence on the young generation as being destructive and deadly due to beats' preference of chaos over order and ignorance over wisdom. Ginsberg called Podhoretz a chauvinistic mainstream culture advocate. Podhoretz was a representative of conservative American intelligence (Flajšar, 2006, p. 76).

Huddleston (2012, p. 2) describes the Beat Generation as being non-conformist. They felt the society was unauthentic and they had no desire for an easy pre-packaged life. They searched for spiritual meaning of life instead of finding pleasure in materialism. Their lifestyle was very different from average population. They were viewed as radical and dangerous.

They looked at normal „square“ society from the periphery and rejected its discipline and codes (Gray, 2011, p. 610).

The Beat Generation were a group of writers, mainly poets, who had a great influence on culture. They called themselves Beats because they felt beaten or defeated by the society. The name Beat is also derived from the beat of jazz music (Holá, Ondryášová, 1997, p. 229).

Gray (2011, p. 610) claims that the term „beat generation“ was coined by Jack Kerouac himself and it had several connotations. In a musical sense, the word „beat“ means keeping the beat, being in the groove or harmony with others. It actually implies the jazz beat. He compares the beat poetry with „typewriter jazz“ in reference to the sound of a typewriter.

There is another suggested meaning of „beat“ in reference to being „beaten“. This sense of the word is social, psychological as well as political.

Flajšar (2006, p. 76) claims that the term „beat“ or „beatnik“ has a negative as well as positive meaning. Beat in a negative sense means beaten or defeated and the positive sense is connected with musical beat. The meaning depended on the commentators and their political point of view.

The Beats liked to spend their time just talking about philosophy and the meaning of life. They were interested in Buddhism and they believed they could find spiritual enlightenment through Buddhism (Huddleston, 2012, p. 4).

Hamby (2011, p. 270) adds that the beats challenged the patterns of the society and shocked the culture. They stressed spontaneity and spirituality, they preferred intuition over reason, Eastern mysticism over Western institutionalized religion. They expressed their quest for self-realization.

High (1986, p. 176) adds that the authors in the 1950s felt uncomfortable in the post-war world. Besides the two fears mentioned earlier in this work, they also faced psychological problems in the new American society. New and important themes were dealt with, as the writers tried to find the answer to the old question „Who am I?“ They looked for answers in philosophy, psychology or Oriental religion.

4.1 Beat poetry

The best known poets of the Beat Generation are Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Allan Ginsberg, Gregory Corso and Gary Snyder. Their work is very typical due to their specific style of writing. They used spontaneous free verse, low language and a lot of slang expressions. They expressed their revolt against the society, their attitudes were anti-middle-class and anti-

intellectual. Their work was provocative and unconventional. The influence of jazz music and Zen Buddhism is strongly felt in their poetry (Holá, Ondryášová, 1997, p. 229).

They also looked for inspiration in English romantic poetry. They admired William Blake who was able to find miracles even in the ordinary everyday things. Percy Bysshe Shelley had a great impact on the beat poets since he claimed that poets should be politically active and they should be a role model for the society. A poet should be a symbol of progress and change. Beat poets could hardly find support in the cultural atmosphere of the post-war conservatism, conformism and McCarthyism's witch hunts. They considered the mainstream American poetry as being too conformist. As a reaction to the mainstream poetry, they looked for more open forms of poetry. Their aspiration was to create a poetry of sincere confession with a liberating effect. This poetry was supposed to relieve an immense pressure put on the young generation of intellectuals by their surrounding and by the mass media. The beat poets looked for answers in Asian religions and literature. There is a sense of Eastern cultural influence in the beat poetry (Flajšar, 2006, p. 76).

4.2 Jack Kerouac (1922 - 1969)

Jack Kerouac was an American novelist, he was born in Massachusetts to French Canadian parents and was educated at Columbia University (Drabble, 2000, p. 554).

Jack Kerouac is mostly famous for his spontaneous prose and not for his poetry, but sometimes it is hard to find a boundary between the two genres. It is not wise to distinguish between his poetry and what he himself calls prose (Tytell in Flajšar, 2006, p. 80).

Flajšar (2006, p. 80) adds that Kerouac's avant-garde poetry deserves the attention as well. He was inspired by Japanese poetry about the beauty of the nature. His favourite form of poems was a short poem called haiku. His poetry collection called *Mexico City Blues* (1959) was inspired by African American blues. The book contains 242 strophes about various

personal themes written in jazz rhythm. The author's poetry is characteristic by his easy and personal confession which is so typical for African American musical and literary tradition. Kerouac desires to be considered as a jazz poet who is blowing his long blues during an afternoon jam session. Excitement about his own existence is apparent throughout the whole book, as well as his improvisatory mastery. Kerouac had an exceptional ear and was able to hear structures and produce structures of sound and rhythm of spoken language. Even though his poetry is of a considerable importance, he is mostly known for his prose *On the Road* (1957), *The Subterraneans* (1958) and *Dharma Bums* (1958).

Kerouac's work is influenced by the Zen idea of spontaneity. His writing style is influenced by this spontaneity, jazz and by Zen Buddhism. This spontaneity is shown by writing his novel *The Subterraneans* in only three days. His most famous novel *On the Road* took just a few weeks to write. It tells a story about a group of Beats travelling across America to the west. The trip represents a trip from unfree city to the free west. The travellers are searching for emotional and spiritual freedom (Holá, Ondryášová, 1997, p. 209).

Kerouac's full biography can be viewed in Appendix 3.

4.2.1 *On the Road*

The novel *On the Road*, first published in 1957, was inspired by Kerouac's own experience when he and his friend Neal Cassidy took a road trip together. It actually became the basis of the book (Huddleston, 2012, p. 3).

Hilský (1992, p. 35) refers to the novel as the bible of the Beats.

Kerouac wrote this best-selling novel on a 75-meter roll of paper. It lacked traditional punctuation and paragraph structure. The book became a symbol of free life and all possibilities life has to offer. Major themes of the book are love, friendship, loyalty and freedom (Hamby, 2011, p. 271).

The novel was written in three weeks and it is a hymn to the freedom of American geography. It is a symbol of possibilities (Drabble, 2000, p. 554).

High (1986, p. 192) claims that most critics complain that the book should have been planned more carefully. The style of the book gives an impression that the journey was made in a great hurry.

4.2.2 Analysis of *On the Road*

An introduction to the novel, written by Ann Charters, quotes the *New York Times* reviewer Gilbert Millstein: “The novel is the most beautifully executed, the clearest and most important utterance yet made by the generation Kerouac himself named years ago as “beat” and whose principal avatar he is”. The review was written in the column “*Books of the Times*” on Wednesday, September 4, 1957. Since then, *On the Road* has been considered as the testament of the Beat Generation and Kerouac became famous instantly. The novel quickly became an American classic. The reporters at that time were curious about what Kerouac meant by the “beat”. Questions were asked about the lifestyle he had described in his novel.

On the Road is a novel about the characters more than about the plot. It describes the moods, visions and movement. It is a story of a journey and travels. The journey is not only one of travelling across the country but the journey is also seen as a personal development. The main characters are constantly on the move. Possibility to travel expresses the desire to have freedom from the restrictions of a society.

4.2.2.1 Part I

Part I introduces the main characters of the novel. The story is about a group of friends, the narrator Sal Paradise, his companion Dean Moriarty and a young poet Carlo Marx. Before meeting Dean, Sal’s life was going nowhere. He had a “feeling that everything was dead.” (p.

3) and “I was a young writer and I wanted to take off.” (p. 10). Dean rejects any kind of authority and social norms and has little respect for law. What he has is a great appetite for all life has to offer and also for the bad things, such as alcohol and drugs.

Sal longs for something more than just bland conformity. “With the coming of Dean Moriarty began the part of my life you could call my life on the road” (p. 3). Sal describes Dean as “a youth tremendously excited with life” (p. 6), “the holy con-man with the shining mind” (p. 7) and “the son of a wino” (p. 35). Carlo calls Dean a “madman” (p. 39).

Sal actually believes Dean is the right person to go on the road with: “Dean is the perfect guy for the road because he actually was born on the road, when his parents were passing through Salt Lake City in 1926, in a jalopy, on their way to Los Angeles” (p. 3). Sal sees Dean as a perfect friend for him, he admires him for his spontaneity, carelessness and craziness: “the only people for me are the mad ones, the ones who are mad to live, mad to talk” (p. 7).

Sal has always wanted to have the freedom to go wherever he wants and has dreamed of going to the West: “Before that I’d often dreamed of going West to see the country, always vaguely planning and never taking off.” (p. 3). So one day Sal leaves New York and decides to set off for the West. He takes bus rides or hitchhikes, meeting various people on his way. His destination is Denver where he is supposed to meet Dean and his friends.

When Sal reaches Des Moines in Iowa, he thinks to himself: “I was half-way across America, at the dividing line between the East of my youth and the West of my future.” (p.16). This geographical division is a symbol of Sal’s life. He is leaving his old life behind in the East, while a new life is waiting at the West. He saw the West as a symbol of freedom and new opportunities. He viewed the West as wild, young and exciting. Going to the West was a way out of the strict society. The need to move comes from dissatisfaction with his current

life. A sense of adventure and exploration is very clear and being on the road is a revolt against conventional society, the society that just ties down people.

While passing through Wyoming on the back of a truck with several other men, he looks up at the starry night sky and thinks to himself: “tingling with kicks at the thought of what lay ahead of me in Denver – whatever, whatever it would be.” (p. 29). Sal is really looking forward to reaching Denver. He sees the place as one full of exuberance and excitement, which is completely different from stagnant and rigid New York he has left behind.

He wants to have the same kind of life his friends have, a life full of joy, drugs, alcohol and girls. Alcohol was a regular part of the Beats’ life, Sal keeps drinking during his pilgrimage: “I was drunk enough to go for anything.” (p. 30) and “all I wanted to do was drink beer” (p. 34). Sal and his friends do not follow the norms of the mainstream society and live how they want. They live this way of life as a revolt against the consumer society. They believe they can get more out of life if they free themselves from the constraints on mainstream society. “This is the story of America. Everybody’s doing what they think they’re supposed to do.” (p. 61)

When Sal reaches Cheyenne, Wyoming, there is a celebration in progress called Wild West Week. Sal gets a first taste of what the West feels like but he feels a bit disappointed. He calls the Wild West celebration “ridiculous” and “absurd” (p. 30). After waking up next morning he catches a glimpse of “the great snowy tops of the Rocky Mountains” and continues on his way to Denver: “I wanted to see my gang in Denver.” (p. 32). When he reaches Longmont in Colorado, he gets really excited since he is closer to his goal: “Damn! damn! damn! I’m making it!” (p. 33). Sal catches a ride with a Denver businessman and cannot wait to get to his dream city: “I tingled all over. I counted minutes and subtracted miles.” (p. 33). He finally reaches Denver with “the most wicked grin of joy in the world” (p. 33).

In Denver Sal meets his friends and for a little while he also sees Dean who “had the tremendous energy of a new kind of American saint” and whose “specialty was stealing cars” (p. 35). According to Sal, Carlo and Dean are “the sordid hipsters of America, a new beat generation that I was slowly joining.” (p. 48). Unfortunately, Sal does not get a chance to spend much time with Dean: “I hadn’t talked to Dean for more than five minutes in the whole time.” (p. 52)

Sal walks through the Denver streets and thinks to himself: “The air was soft, the stars so fine, the promise of every cobbled alley so great, that I thought I was in a dream.” (p. 39). After a while he again feels the need to move: “I was itching to get on to San Francisco.” (p. 50) and “Beyond the glittering street was darkness, and beyond the darkness was the West. I had to go.” (p. 52). In San Francisco, Sal meets his friend Remi and gets a job as a special policeman (p. 56). His work is to guard the barracks full of workers. But he does not like his job and soon he feels he has to continue on his road: “The time was coming for me to leave Frisco or I’d go crazy.” (p. 66). The life in California is not what he has hoped for. “There is something brown and holy about the East; and California is white like washlines and emptyheaded – at least that’s what I thought then.” (p. 71). While standing on a canyon rim, overlooking San Francisco, he realizes he is “at the end of America – no more land – and now there was nowhere to go but back.” (p. 70). It seems as if he is happy only while travelling but cannot get stuck in one place. Only being on the road makes sense to him.

Sal is waiting for a bus to Los Angeles when suddenly he sees “the cutest little Mexican girl” (p. 73). Sal feels “so lonely, so sad, so tired, so quivering, so broken, so beat” (p. 73) and this Mexican girl gives him a new sense of hope and a spark for life. The girl’s name is Terry and they quickly fall in love and start a passionate relationship. After a few days they decide to leave Los Angeles, “the loneliest and most brutal of American cities” (p. 77). Sal and Terry find a “cotton-picking work” (p. 86) but Sal soon realizes this kind of life is not for him

and decides to go back to New York: “I could feel the pull of my own life calling me back.” (p. 89). Sal is constantly moving and searching, going from one place to next, looking for a life of a true “beat”. When he returns to New York, he feels “sick and tired of life” (p. 96) and feels “absolute madness” (p. 96) while standing on Times Square. Sal seems to be disappointed. He has not found what he has been looking for in the West. He is happy only when on the move but once he stays in one place he feels the urge to move on again.

4.2.2.2 Part II

Part I ends with Sal’s return to New York to his aunt’s house. His aunt is “a respectable woman hung-up in this sad world” (p. 110). Sal starts going to school and dates a girl named Lucille. Then one day, while visiting his relatives in Virginia, Dean shows up with his friend Ed. Sal is surprised but happy to see these “two mindless cads” (p. 100). Ed is described as “a tall, calm, unthinking fellow who was completely ready to do anything Dean asked him” (p. 101) and “a very smooth man with the women” (p. 114). Sal expresses his feeling: “The bug was on me again, and the bug’s name was Dean Moriarty and I was off on another spurt around the road.” (p. 104). Dean seems to be very promising: “we’ll all go off to sweet life” (p. 103).

Sal realizes that “The madness of Dean had bloomed into a weird flower.” (p. 102). While driving to New York and back to Virginia, moving Sal’s aunt’s furniture, Dean expresses regrets about his past life, the life of being “a young punk, stealing cars” (p. 109). He is sure he will “never be in jail again” (p. 109). Suddenly he is “the new and complete Dean, grown to maturity” (p. 103). Sal introduces his friends to Lucille and “her face darkened - she sensed the madness they put in me.” (p. 113). She says: “I don’t like you when you’re with them.” (p. 113). Sal realizes his “affair with Lucille wouldn’t last much longer” (p. 113). He knows Lucille cannot understand his “running from one falling star to another” (p. 113) and he has

“nothing to offer anybody except my own confusion” (p.113). He gives up his dreams of marriage and family. After spending some time in New York, all Sal wants is “to take one more magnificent trip to the West Coast” (p. 116). So they get ready to “cross the groaning continent again” (p. 117). Sal and his friends get on the road again. Sal thinks it is “all going to be one big saga of the mist” (p. 120). Dean is really excited and screams: “Here we go!” (p. 120). He is “back in his element” (p. 121). They are all “leaving confusion and nonsense behind and performing our one and noble function of the time, move” (p. 121). Being on the move is pure and straightforward as nothing else in life.

They are going south to New Orleans to meet their friend Old Bull Lee, leaving “the dirty snows of frosty fagtown New York” (p. 121) behind. They have “all the golden land ahead” and “all kinds of unforeseen events lurking to surprise you” (p. 122). They pass through Virginia, seeing “the whole country like an oyster for us to open; and the pearl was there, the pearl was there” (p. 124). They believe that there is something good waiting for them ahead, they just have to go far enough to find it. They continue on the “holy road” (p. 125).

When they finally arrive in New Orleans, they scream: “Ah! God! Life!” (p. 127). They get on a ferry to cross the Mississippi River, “the great brown father of waters” (p. 127). The ferry can be seen as a gateway to the West. Crossing this great river is a symbol of a chance at a new life, leaving the old one behind and starting a new one.

Old Bull Lee remembers when America used to be “wild and brawling and free, with abundance and any kind of freedom for everyone” (p. 131). But now the country is just full of “Washington bureaucracy” (p. 131), “defective rubber tires” (p. 135) and clothes that will not last. So everybody has “to go on working and punching timeclocks” (p. 135) to work, make and spend money to feed the industrial society and keep the disposable consumer machinery going to feed the Washington bureaucracy. His speech gives an impression of something very

precious gone forever. He is also very critical about wars: “The bastards right now are only interested in seeing if they can blow up the world.” (p. 139).

After couple of days they hit the road again, this time to California. They make a stop in Texas where Dean takes his clothes off and starts “yipping and leaping naked in the sage” (p. 146). Then he asks Sal and Marylou to take their clothes off as well to “disemburden” (p. 146) themselves. This kind of behaviour is not in accordance with the norms of the uptight mainstream society. They want to show their freedom, the clothes are restricting them the same way like the conventional society does.

They finally reach “the fabulous white city of San Francisco” (p. 154) and its “goldenness in the late afternoon” (p. 154). Dean leaves Sal and Marylou on the street and drives off to see Camille. Marylou gets angry: “You see what a bastard he is?” (p. 154). She goes her own way after a few days. Sal does not appreciate Dean’s behaviour either and “lost faith in him” (p. 155). Sal has what he describes as “the beatest time of my life” (p. 155), since he is out of his mind with “hunger and bitterness” (p. 155). Sal and Dean are “sick and tired of everything” (p. 159). After “goofing around San Francisco” (p. 161) for a while, Sal decides to go back home: “I wanted to get out.” (p. 161). At the end of Part II, Sal gets on the bus headed for New York. Both part I and II end with Sal’s disappointment and sorrow. In both cases he returns home without having found what he has hoped for. He does not seem to be able to find his happiness, the only freedom is travelling.

4.2.2.3 Part III

Sal leaves New York again for the third time and travels to Detroit. There he realizes his miserable white life has “not enough life, joy, kicks, darkness, music, not enough night” (p. 163) and he is just a “white man disillusioned” (p. 164). On the other hand, the minorities have more individuality and freedom. Sal has had his “white ambitions” (p. 164) all his life

but now he knows that the minorities retain their true individuality. He wishes he could change lives with “the happy, true-hearted, ecstatic Negroes of America” (p. 164).

Then Sal hits the road again and goes to San Francisco where he meets Dean. Sal feels liberated from his past when he reaches San Francisco. He thinks: “there was nothing behind me any more, all my bridges were gone” (p. 165). It seems like his travelling cleanses him of all burdens of life. Dean is not in a good condition, his “beat” life has taken its toll. He has ended up with “infected thumb” and “surrounded by the battered suitcases” (p. 171). Sal and Dean, the “two broken-down heroes of the Western night” (p. 173) decide to go to Italy. But first they want to enjoy their last “two-day Frisco kicks” (p. 174). After drinking and spending time in jazz joints, they leave “America’s most excited city” (p. 187) and head to New York again. Sal suddenly admits he hates to leave, he feels that with Dean he is “rushing through the world without a chance to see it” (p. 187).

They go to a travel bureau to arrange a shared ride with other people. The passengers in the front seat represent the mainstream conventional American society: “They have worries, they’re counting the miles, they’re thinking about where to sleep tonight, how much money for gas, the weather, how they’ll get there” (p. 189). This is in contrast with the “beat” life, the life of no worries in the world. They thrive on uncertainties that plague most people. To Dean, worrying is a way of life for some people and it is just a waste of time: “they need to worry and betray time” (p. 189). Dean’s goal is to live as spontaneously as possible and not to care about worries and responsibilities of life. They reach Denver and realize they do not know where they will go or how they will get there but it does not matter because they have “longer ways to go” (p. 192) and “the road is life” (p. 192). Life is not about the destination but about the journey. Whenever they reach the end of the road and cannot go any further - hitting the Pacific or the Atlantic, they simply need to go back and keep moving.

After spending a few days in Denver and stealing several cars, they decide they need to get on the road and continue to the East before the police catches them. They go to a travel bureau and they get an offer to drive a Cadillac to Chicago and carry other passengers with them. The car was “magnificent” and “a dreamboat” (p. 209). The car represents their dream of freedom to go wherever they wish. They could drive anywhere in the world and “dig the whole world with a car like this” (p. 209). Dean’s soul is “wrapped up in a fast car, a coast to reach, and a woman at the end of the road” (p. 209). This means they are not wandering aimlessly but in fact they are speeding towards a new future.

They continue towards Chicago and the country is “beginning to look like the soft East again” (p. 214). The “great dry West was accomplished and done” (p. 214) as they are getting closer to the “smokes of Chicago” (p. 216). After spending a night in a jazz joint they park the car in its owner’s garage and it is time to move on. They take a bus to Detroit, and there they decide to stay up in all-night movies. The people who spend their time in all-night movies are “the end” (p. 222). They are “beat Negroes, old white bums, longhaired hipsters, whores” (p. 222). In general, these are the kind of people who have “nothing to do, nowhere to go, nobody to believe in” (p. 222). These kinds of people are in contrast with the false reality of Hollywood movies. Sal wakes up in the morning and sees theatre attendants sweeping the garbage all around the place. He begins to identify himself with the garbage around him. He feels rejected by the society and thinks he is not better than the trash around him. Sal speculates on what it would be like if he were swept away and lost in the garbage.

Sal and Dean go to a travel bureau to find a ride to New York. The driver is not aware he has “contracted a ride with two maniacs” (p. 223). They finally get closer to New York, “the great and final city of America” (p. 224). They go to Sal’s aunt’s new flat in Long Island and the trip is over. There is no more land, just the Atlantic. The third part ends with Sal being

back in New York in his aunt's house, the only security he has in life. He comes back home for the third time, again not finding the perfect life in the West. He is lost and clueless.

4.2.2.4 Part IV

Spring comes and Sal feels the need to go on the road again. He goes alone for the first time, leaving Dean behind. Sal and Dean are talking and Dean assumes the two will end up as bums eventually. He just wants to live life his own way and not bother about politicians and the rich (p. 229). Their life is “the raggedy madness” and “the senseless nightmare road” (p. 231) which is in contrast with the conventional society whose life is just “endless and beginningless emptiness” (p. 231). Sal hits the road, “the endless poem” (p. 232) as he calls it. He stops in Denver for a few days and the whole world opens up before him (p. 235). Then he gets the news that Dean has bought a car and is coming to Denver like “a wrath to the West” (p. 236). He is rushing over “the groaning and awful continent” (p. 236). In “holy Denver” (p. 241) they all go on a drinking spree and the next day they take off for Mexico, “the most fabulous” (p. 241) trip of all. It was no longer east-west, but “magic south” (p. 241). Dean, Sal and their friend Stan start their journey to Mexico, “heading for unknown southern lands” (p. 244). Mexico is a symbol of the free and unknown, they believe they can find in the south what they have not found in the east or west.

While driving, Stan gets bitten by a bug and his hand swells awfully. They see the trip as “sinister and doomed” (p. 244). They stop in San Antonio in Texas, just hundred and fifty miles from “the magic border” (p. 249). Finally they reach “the end of Texas, the end of America” (p. 249), not knowing what is waiting for them ahead but they know there is something good waiting. They can already feel “the enormous presence of whole great Mexico” (p. 249). They have no idea what Mexico is like and they cross “the mysterious bridge over the river” (p. 249). When they cross the border, they feel “wonder” and

“amazement” (p. 250), since the place looks exactly like they have imagined Mexico would look like. They go into a bar and buy beer and cigarettes, appreciating how cheap everything is. Behind them “lay the whole America and everything Dean and I had previously known about life” (p. 251). They have a feeling they are at a new beginning and have finally found “the magic land at the end of the road” (p. 251). They get very excited to explore “the big continent ahead”, with “all the jungles all the way down and a whole desert plateau” (p. 251). They feel completely awake as opposed to feeling “half dead” (p. 251) before crossing the border. Dean talks to Sal: “we’re leaving everything behind us and entering a new and unknown phase of things” (p. 251). They believe they finally see the true world. Dean is truly excited and keeps saying “What kicks!” and “Oh, what a land!” (p. 252). They think they have reached “heaven” (p. 253). Even people there seem different, they have a look with “all of the human qualities” (p. 253). Dean says: “I want to get on and on - this road drives me!!” (p. 254).

They visit a whorehouse in a town called Gregoria, where they can play music on the jukebox as loud as they please which they have never dared back in America. After getting drunk and having fun with the girls, they continue driving. They do the same things in Mexico that they do in the United States. They just drink, get high and chase after girls.

They pass through a town of Limon in the middle of the jungle, the town full of “the unimaginable softness” (p. 267). They decide to sleep outside in the jungle, but the place is full of mosquitoes and other insects, making their sleep miserable. In the morning, they continue towards Mexico City, driving on the Pan-American Highway. They see several Indians on their way, contemplating how untouched this nation is by civilization. “How different they must be in their private concerns and evaluations and wishes!” (p. 271). These people are definitely burdened by restrictions of a society. The little Indian girls sell crystals to passing travellers in exchange for something “civilization could offer” (p. 273), not being

aware of “the poor broken delusion of it” (p. 273). This civilization in the middle of the jungle is free from the pressures of work and money and is untouched by corruption and modernity. At the same time, what seems to be a complete freedom from everything is people’s poverty.

As they get closer to Mexico City, “the end of the road” (p. 274), they pass through “vast and Biblical areas of the world” (p. 274). In the city, they are impressed with the fast life where everything seems to be moving and all Mexico is “one vast Bohemian camp” (p. 275) full of life. This is what they knew they would find at the end of the road. This is the end of their restless wanderings.

Then Sal gets a fever and feels delirious, he has dysentery. Dean leaves sick Sal with Stan in Mexico and drives back to New York to get his divorce sorted out. Sal realizes what “a rat” Dean really is but at the same time, he understands him and cannot be angry with him. Sal realizes Dean is not able to commit to anybody and anything. He just needs to be on the move in search of something he might not even be sure what it is.

4.2.2.5 Part V

Dean gets as far as Louisiana where his car breaks down so he flies the rest of the way back to New York. After having his divorce papers signed, he jumps on a bus to go to San Francisco to rejoin Camille. Sal manages to get back to New York where he meets a girl “with the pure and innocent dear eyes” (p. 278) he has always dreamed of. They plan to move to San Francisco together. Dean offers he will come to get their stuff and to take them “home” (p. 278). But they do not manage to save enough money to buy a truck to get on the road. Dean gets on a train to return to San Francisco. The book ends with Sal sitting on an old river pier thinking about Dean Moriarty. He might be contemplating whether he will ever see Dean again and where will his life take him next. Maybe the “beat” life is not that great after all and settling down with the right woman might be the way to go. On the other hand, Dean has

several divorces behind him and several children to pay child support for. And he is still not happy, running from one place to next and still not being able to find his happiness.

4.3 Allen Ginsberg (1926 - 1997)

Allen Ginsberg was the central poet of the Beat Generation and one of the most popular American poets of the 20th century. Besides writing poetry, he was also a literary agent for other Beat writers and served as an intermediary between writers and publishers. Ginsberg was a figure associated with major schools of American poetry, such as San Francisco Renaissance, the Black Mountain poets, the Confessionals and the New York School (Hemmer, 2007, p. 109).

Flajšar (2006, p. 77) describes Ginsberg as the most famous poet of the Beat Generation with a great influence on post-war poetry. He attended Columbia University in New York in the 1940s and at that time he made acquaintance with New York avant-garde scene and the underground.

Ginsberg is considered as the spokesman and the prophet of the Beat Generation. He was born in Newark, New Jersey, in a middle-class Jewish family. Ginsberg's mother Naomi was a member of the communist party and had a strong influence on Allen Ginsberg. Unfortunately, she suffered from a mental illness. His father Louis was a high school teacher and a conservative formalistic poet. His mother's illness and his father's conservatism had a negative impact on Allen's personal development. As a typical left-wing intellectual of the post-war era, Ginsberg rebelled against conservatism of American post-war culture and family life. Ginsberg was also known for his experimentation with various drugs with hallucinatory effects (Lewicki, 1997, p. 87).

His negative attitude towards society is expressed through his free-form poetry. He writes about his personal experience and sharply comments on social and political issues. He is best

known for his first poem collection called *Howl and other Poems* published in 1956. He feels disillusionment with modern materialistic society with its middle-class values and lifestyle. His poetry gives a feeling of spontaneity just like Kerouac's novels (Holá, Ondryášová, 1997, p. 230).

In the beginning, he wrote formalistic poetry under the influence of English poets. This poetry was rhymed and sophisticated, witty, lovely but untrue at the same time. After receiving an advice from William Carlos Williams, Ginsberg started to write his poems in the form of prose, which is closer to a regular spoken conversation. Ginsberg realised the importance of Williams' ideas and wanted to focus his poetry on the body language, human voice and real personal feelings. He wanted to communicate his own sexual minority experience and at the same time he criticised American society for its hypocrisy. Ginsberg's poetry was influenced by Buddhist approach to existence and by music. This music was mainly folk songs, jazz and blues. Friendship with Jack Kerouac is responsible for his affection with blues. His poetry was full of public protest. (Flajšar, 2006, p. 78).

Ginsberg is often called a modern Walt Whitman, because he writes a free-form poetry just like Whitman. He praises the free life-style through his poetry and this poetry almost always has a message. This message is about defending drug-taking, defending homosexuality or the author attacks American society and politics. He was deeply interested in Zen Buddhism and he used the Zen idea of spontaneity in writing his poetry. This spontaneity gave an emotional power to his poems. Ginsberg is still popular amongst young readers today, but not as popular as he was in the 1950s and 1960s (High, 1986, p. 191).

Gray (2011, p. 611) calls Ginsberg the greatest poet of the Beat Generation. He took part in a demonstration against American involvement in Vietnam.

Ginsberg was also politically very active. He was known for his antiwar and antinuclear attitude. He was a spokesman of drug decriminalization and gay civil rights (Hemmer, 2007, p. 109).

Flajšar (2006, p. 79) mentions Ginsberg's short visit in Czechoslovakia in 1965. Here he quickly became a cult personality due to his shocking open-mindedness, which was quite unusual in the atmosphere of totalitarian dictatorship of 1960s Czechoslovakia. During his visit, he met several Czech Americanists and was elected as the students' King of Majales celebration. Shortly after this event he was deported from the country because of his alleged subversive activities.

Ginsberg was expelled from Czechoslovakia because of his support for free speech and sexual freedom. The Communist government saw him as an outsider agitating a counterrevolutionary student movement. His notebook was seized by the police and Ginsberg was flown out of the country to London. He wrote about this experience in poem *Kral Majales (King of May)*, (1965). Prior to his visit to Prague, he was expelled from Cuba. He publicly spoke about his outrage with situation in Cuba, where Fidel Castro persecuted homosexuals at Havana University (Hemmer, 2007, p. 112).

Ginsberg's full biography is available in Appendix 4.

4.3.1 *Howl*

Howl is Ginsberg's most famous poem and it is a loud cry at the destructiveness of American materialistic society. He attacks the modern America around him in this poem. The poem was written in 1955 and published one year later by Lawrence Ferlinghetti as a part of his poetry collection titled *Howl and Other Poems*. *Howl* is emotionally and sexually explicit (Lewicki, 1997, p. 88).

High (1986, p. 191) adds that the poem was written to be shouted out in a coffee house. Ginsberg was trying to show other people how deeply he felt.

Gray (2011, p. 611) adds that it was Ginsberg's first published book of poems and sold over fifty thousand copies within a short period of time.

The poem attracted major attention when the copies were confiscated by the San Francisco police in 1956 on the grounds that, as the Collector of Customs put it, „The words and the sense of the writing were obscene“. This incident actually guaranteed a national fame for Ginsberg and his work (Gray, 2011, p. 611).

The poem quickly made Ginsberg a representative and a symbol of beat poetry. The first part of the poem is indictment of American society, the society which suppresses individual thinking of young intellectuals and does not allow any other ideological alternative (Flajšar, 2006, p. 78).

Hemmer (2007, p. 109) adds that Ginsberg's work has been translated into more than 22 languages, giving him the highest global reach of all beat poets.

4.3.2 Analysis of *Howl*

The poem is written in free verse and consists of three parts and a fourth part called *Footnote to Howl*. The poem consists of 112 long lines in total and each of these long lines is intended to be read in one long breath.

Ginsberg dedicated the poem to Carl Solomon which is mentioned below the poem's title. Ginsberg met the American writer Carl Solomon in the Columbia Presbyterian Psychiatric Institute in 1949, while being admitted for psychiatric treatment. They quickly became close friends. Solomon actually inspired the poem. Solomon is a representative of the post-war counterculture (Hemmer, 2007, p. 110).

The poem is written as a stream of consciousness and has no regular rhyme or rhythm. The title itself means the author wants to be heard and he wants to scream out loud his opinion. *Howl* means it is not a traditional conservative poem about love or nature. There is nothing pretty or comfortable about the poem. *Howl* wants to be heard and wants to wake up people from their lethargy and sleepy lazy conformity. *Howl* speaks on behalf of the generation suppressed by the dominant American culture that valued conformity.

4.3.2.1 Part I

Part I is the longest one of the three parts and consists of one long sentence. The individual clauses are separated by commas. Part I focuses on the lives of the Beat Generation personalities. It describes their way of life, travels and incidents. The first line is probably the most famous one: "I saw the best of minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving hysterical naked". Ginsberg is referring to Carl Solomon as being one of these great minds, since they met in a psychiatric institution. Madness is a major theme of the poem. Ginsberg blames the dominant American culture for destroying those who refuse conformity, driving them into insanity. By "the best of minds" he also means other intelligent people who were misunderstood by the society. These "best minds" had no choice other than going insane or mad. He refers to his circle of friends and acquaintances that became the greatest figures of the twentieth century American literature, known as the Beat Generation, including Jack Kerouac and William Burroughs. Majority of the lines in part I begin with the word "who", meaning the "best minds". The Beat Generation writers are referred to as "angelheaded hipsters" in line 3. Ginsberg calls "the best of minds" angels because he values them highly for refusing to be a part of a society they despise so much. For Ginsberg, the "best minds" are holy and sacred just like angels. But this group of people had no easy and comfortable life, as is mentioned in line 4. Their life is described as one of "poverty" and "cold-water flats".

In line 2, the author hints at the fact that the Beat Generation is closely connected with African-Americans: “dragging themselves through the negro streets at dawn looking for an angry fix”. This connection between the Beats and African-Americans comes mainly through the jazz music. The Beat Generation writers were inspired by jazz music, which is reflected in their work. African-Americans did not have equal rights at that time and were considered as second class citizens. The “best minds” were viewed similarly by the mainstream population. The “best minds” rejected the society which rejected them and African-Americans. The writers also lived in the same neighbourhood together with African-Americans. “Negro streets” also describes the life of the “best minds” as life in poverty, depravity and harsh environment. “Angry fix” may refer to their drug use as a way to ease their anger and frustration with the society. Drug use is also referred to in line 4 as “hollow-eyed and high”. The Beat Generation writers were known for their extensive drug use. This fact is also mentioned in line 9 as “returning through Laredo with a belt of marihuana”, when the “best minds” wanted to smuggle marihuana from Mexico through the city of Laredo in Texas.

“Burning for the ancient heavenly connection” (line 3) means searching for a spiritual part of life. Ginsberg viewed the consumer society as one without spirit and turned to the Eastern religions to find peace and energy.

“Who were expelled from the academies for crazy & publishing obscene odes” (line 7) reflects Ginsberg’s own life. He was expelled from university for writing poems full of obscenity. His poetry was not appreciated by the mainstream conformist society.

The life of the Beat Generation is described as “with dreams, with drugs, with waking nightmares, alcohol and cock and endless balls“ (line 11) and “wine drunkenness” (line 13). It is crystal clear that their life was full of alcohol and drugs. Their whole life in general was a complete opposite of the average population. Their life was full of revolt and anger. They wore “pubic beards” (line 9) as a sign of revolt when the standard was a clean look with

carefully cut hair and shaved face. The “best minds” wore long hair and beards to show they wanted to be different and did not want to be part of the society. They expressed their need to break from social norms this way.

Another major theme is freedom. This freedom is expressed by travelling, just like in Jack Kerouac’s novel *On the Road*. Several travel adventures are mentioned in the poem: “endless rides from Battery to holy Bronx” (line 14), “who loned it through the streets of Idaho” (line 25), “when Baltimore gleamed in supernatural ecstasy” (line 26), “who jumped in limousines with the Chinaman of Oklahoma” (line 27), “who reappeared on the West Coast” (line 30), “who went out whoring through Colorado in myriad stolen night-cars” (line 43). Several places in New York City are mentioned, since New York City was a meeting place for several writers of the Beat Generation. Ginsberg writes about “the Brooklyn Bridge” (line 16) and “Empire State” (line 17).

4.3.2.2 Part II

While part I focuses mostly on describing the life of the “best minds”, the second part investigates the root of all evil within the society and explains why the “best minds” go mad.

Part II is considerably shorter than part I and there is an exclamation mark after each line and also after certain words within the lines. It also introduces a name Moloch.

Moloch is a Canaanite god to whom parents burned their children in sacrifice. Canaanite religion is a group of ancient Semitic religions. Moloch was re-created in “Howl” as the sacrifice of Ginsberg’s generation to the cold-war military-industrial complex (Hemmer, 2007, p. 140).

Moloch is the central figure in part II and represents all the evil of American Society. Ginsberg calls Moloch “Filth! Ugliness!” (line 80). He accuses Moloch of “Children screaming under the stairways! Boys sobbing in armies! Old men weeping in the parks!” (line

80). Ginsberg basically blames Moloch for everything bad happening, he blames him for wars and boys having to go to the army. Ginsberg was known for his disapproval of the Vietnam War. Ginsberg views Moloch as the cause of all the destruction within the society. Moloch is a symbol of everything that is wrong with the society. The author calls Moloch “Nightmare of Moloch! Moloch the loveless! Mental Moloch! Moloch the heavy judger of men!” (line 81). It is clear that Moloch has no love for people. He tends to judge people and is a sort of a nightmare for people. Moloch is cruel and has no emotions or sympathy.

Moloch is also a symbol of evil state institutions, such as the Congress. Ginsberg sees Moloch as “the incomprehensible prison”, “the crossbone soulless jailhouse and Congress of sorrows” and “the vast stone of war” (line 82). In this line, Moloch represents all the evil of the state authority which is responsible for all the sorrows and wars. The society is a monster and Moloch symbolizes this monster. Everything was sacrificed to create this monster. Moloch’s mind is a “pure machinery” (line 83). This machinery is a rotten system of the society, the system that has no mercy for people and just exploits people. The system just devours and swallows people and makes them go insane. The system only cares about profit. The poem is full of pain, outrage and protest against the society.

Moloch’s soul is “electricity and banks” (line 85). Electricity and banks are both symbols of industrial capitalist America. They are both the cornerstones of industry and business. Ginsberg was known for his sympathy with the Communist party and he viewed capitalism as a simple exploitation of working class. According to Ginsberg, capitalism is a reason for poverty. Capitalist society is driven by money and desire for success.

“Moloch who entered my soul early!” (line 87) means that Ginsberg was influenced by the consumer society from an early age. Capitalism and industrialism had a great impact on him as well as on the whole society. Ginsberg sees the industrial society as “Robot apartments! invisible suburbs! blind capitals! demonic industries! monstrous bombs!” (line 88).

In the following line, Ginsberg describes how people were misled into believing that material success would guarantee happiness: “They broke their back lifting Moloch to heaven! Pavements, trees, radios, tons! lifting the city to Heaven which exists and is everywhere about us!” (line 89). The author talks about the workers who built America in a hope for better future but in reality heaven is inside the people and not in the material world. He claims that all good things have “gone down the American river!” (line 90) and “down on the rocks of time!” (line 92). All values and morals are gone. All goodness was destroyed by the society. The American society only values economic prosperity, industrial growth and suburban wealth. The only escape from this life is insanity. The last line of part II suggests also a suicide as a way out of this misery: “They jumped off the roof!” (line 93).

4.3.2.3 Part III

Part III has a form of a call-and-response litany between the speaker and Carl Solomon. The two are committed in Rockland asylum (Hemmer, 2007, p. 140).

Ginsberg addresses Carl Solomon and expresses sympathy for his condition: “Carl Solomon! I’m with you in Rockland where you’re madder than I am.” (line 94). Ginsberg calls the mental institution “Rockland” but in reality the two spent time in the Columbia Presbyterian Psychiatric Institute. Ginsberg had a deep understanding for Solomon’s illness due to his childhood experience with his own mother who suffered from a mental disorder. He mentions his mother in line 96: “where you imitate the shade of my mother”.

All remaining lines of part III begin with the phrase “I’m with you in Rockland” (lines 95 – 112). Each line describes Solomon’s madness and the life in the mental institution. Ginsberg talks about Solomon’s insanity: “you laugh at this invisible humor” (line 98), “your condition has become serious” (line 100), “you scream in a straightjacket” (line 104) or “you accuse

your doctors of insanity” (line 107). It is clear that his condition was serious and he suffered from hallucinations and delusions: “you’ve murdered your twelve secretaries” (line 97).

Ginsberg is very critical of the mental institutions: “the soul is innocent and immortal it should never die ungodly in an armed madhouse” (line 105). He claims that insanity is a genius in fact and the system just tries to kill the genius. Such a system is inhuman and destroys the “best minds”. He is also critical toward the electric shock therapy Solomon was subjected to: “fifty more shocks will never return you soul” (line 106). Ginsberg views the confinement in “an armed madhouse” (line 105) as a way to suppress the “best minds”. This confinement is in contrast with the freedom described in part I. The freedom was expressed by various travel experiences. The mind as well as the body is confined.

The last line tells us that Ginsberg is not in the hospital with Solomon but instead he is at “my cottage in the Western night” (line 112). Ginsberg is only dreaming about Solomon.

4.3.2.4 *Footnote to Howl*

The fourth part called *Footnote to Howl* begins with the word “Holy!” and this word is repeated fifteen times in the first line. That same word is repeated many times throughout the poem and most of the lines begin with the word. Ginsberg tries to imply that there is holiness in mankind. The word “holy” is repeated so many times to really give an impression that everything is truly holy.

To Ginsberg, everything is holy: “The world is holy! The soul is holy! The skin is holy!” (line 2). The *Footnote* names a lot of things that are holy. Some of the things listed might be viewed as ordinary or even disgusting by average mainstream society: “nose”, “tongue”, “cock”, “hand” and “asshole” (line 2). But in reality everything is holy equally. All people are equally holy as well, as is written in line 4: “The bum’s as holy as the seraphim!”

He does not only list holy things but he also mentions several people who are holy according to him: “Allen”, “Solomon”, “Kerouac” and “Burroughs” (line 6). These are his friends or acquaintances that were referred to as “angelheaded hipsters” in part I.

The author again mentions his mother who suffered from a mental illness: “Holy my mother in the insane asylum!” (line 7). He then lists several “holy” cities: “Holy New York Holy San Francisco Holy Paris” (line 11). These cities can be considered as those where the “best minds” have some freedom, where the “best minds” can live, work and breathe.

Ginsberg even calls “holy the angel in Moloch” (line 12) to say that there is a possibility to find holiness even in the industrial world: “holy the railroad holy the locomotive” (line 13). He even says “Holy the solitudes of skyscrapers and pavements!” (line 9). This is in contrast with the part II where Ginsberg sees Moloch and the whole industrial world as a force that destroys the world.

In the *Footnote*, Ginsberg sees holiness in all aspects of life and even in the society and humanity itself: “Holy forgiveness! mercy! charity! faith! bodies! suffering!” (line 14). And above all, he values the holiness of the human mind. This is expressed in the last line of the *Footnote*: “Holy the supernatural extra brilliant intelligent kindness of the soul!” (line 15). Salvation is to be achieved through finding the things that are truly holy. At the end there is a hope for salvation.

5. Teaching literature

The following chapter will focus on practical aspect of teaching literature in the English classroom. The chapter will concentrate on how and why to use literature in the classroom and how to teach English through literature. Reading is a great way how to improve reading comprehension and enrich vocabulary. Reading also helps to learn about English and American culture and English speaking people’s way of life, including social and political

issues. Literature is closely connected with history, since literature reflects various issues of the society in different periods of time. A suitable book, poem or a play needs to be selected based on the students' level of foreign language knowledge. Texts should not be too difficult for the students to understand.

It is important to mention that not all literary works reflect a true reality within a society. Some books are plain fiction. Certain books concentrate only on a specific part of the society in a specific time of history. Since English is a global language, students can encounter various cultures throughout literature, depending on where the author comes from. Osborne's play *Look Back in Anger* and Amis's novel *Lucky Jim* deal with the situation in 1950s Britain and the main characters are of a lower-class origin. Students should not assume that all people had the life described in these two works. The same applies to Kerouac's novel *On the Road* and Ginsberg's poem *Howl*. These two works describe the life of the Beat Generation but the mainstream American society had a completely different way of life and values.

Lazar (1993, p. 27) believes in a close integration of language and literature in the classroom. This approach helps students to achieve their main goal, which is knowledge of and proficiency in English. The purpose is not only to study or read literature but also to use literature for language practice. Various sources of literature offer a wide range of registers and provide interesting and motivating topics for discussion. One of these topics could be why Jim Dixon or Jimmy Porter was angry.

Gruber (1992, p. 36) adds that it is not enough to read only texts in the course books, since these are created only for the particular course book and do not represent a natural text. He advises to read short stories, novels and newspaper articles. He claims it is necessary to know at least 80 % of the vocabulary to understand a text in a foreign language.

Kupka (2012, p. 60) recommends reading as the best way how to practise vocabulary and to observe grammar rules of a foreign language. Spelling is also easily learned by reading

because the reader memorizes the spelling just by seeing the words repeatedly. When selecting a reading material, it is necessary to take students' language level into account.

Literature itself can be the content of the course. This approach examines the history and characteristics of literary movements. Emphasis is put on the social, political and historical background (Lazar, 1993, p. 35).

Gruber (1992, p. 39) suggests reading a simultaneous book which is in English and in Czech at the same time. Such a simultaneous reading has a form of a book, where one side of a double page is in English and the other one is in Czech. It is faster to look up unknown vocabulary in the text than looking it up in a dictionary. It is advised to read the text only in a foreign language. Students should read the Czech translation only when they do not understand certain words or the whole sentence. As the students improve, they need to look less at the Czech translation.

On the other hand, Kupka (2012, p. 62) recommends reading longer passages in Czech first to understand what it is about. Reading the same passage in a foreign language follows after. Every author usually uses some words which tend to repeat throughout the book. If the words are repeated, the reader remembers them more easily.

Reading a book should be accompanied by various activities, such as discussions, interpretations and role playing. It might be useful to predict the content based on the title of the book or on the pictures inside the book. Role playing is a fun activity for students as well (Němečková, 2013).

Students can learn dialogues in Osborne's play *Look Back in Anger* and then perform the dialogues in front of the whole class. Students can be divided into small groups and each group learns a different part of the play. Activities after reading a literary work can include answering questions, describing the main characters' personalities or discussing the themes of the play.

Plays definitely have their place in the English classroom. They are specific because they contain a lot of conversational language. Students often pick up new phrases or formulaic expressions by studying the dialogues of a play. Practising role playing is a great way to increase cohesion and cooperation in a group. A strong sense of involvement motivates students and encourages them to participate in a given activity (Lazar, 1993, p. 138).

Reading plays is a good way to practise vocabulary, since they consist of a lot of dialogues. These dialogues contain mostly common vocabulary, known to most foreign language learners. A teacher needs to choose a play, where the language is close to everyday speech (Kupka, 2012, p. 61). A sample lesson plan using a part of *Look Back in Anger* can be viewed in Appendix 5.

Reading with listening at the same time is a great way to learn a language. When the students see and hear the text at the same time, they get to know the correct rhythm and intonation. Pronunciation is practised this way as well, since some words tend to be pronounced differently if they are used before or after certain words. A person has a 60 % chance to remember information received through seeing and hearing at the same time (Kupka, 2012, p. 63).

When choosing a novel to be read in the classroom, it is advised to pick a rather short novel. Students do most of the reading by themselves at home. They can read one or two chapters every week for the next lesson, depending on the length of the chapters. The novel can be read in one school year or in half of a school year, depending on its length. Students can write a short summary of each chapter and have a discussion in the classroom about the story and its characters. The novel should be chosen based on difficulty of its topics and vocabulary. If the students get overwhelmed by unfamiliar language, they might get discouraged (Lazar, 1993, p. 90). *On the Road* or *Lucky Jim* might be a good choice, since the language used is very close to everyday speech. Language used in *On the Road* is very

informal and is not suitable for primary schools. A sample lesson plan using a part of *On the Road* can be viewed in Appendix 6.

Poetry is a valuable tool for foreign language learning. Poetry is very specific due to its own register, vocabulary and punctuation. Poems usually offer unusual use of language and syntax. Students gain interpretative ability when trying to understand a poem. Since many students generally do not like poetry, reading a poem might seem as a daunting prospect. A good idea is to have a classroom discussion about the interpretation of a poem, its topics, symbols and overall deeper meaning. The teacher plays a key role in motivating students to read poetry (Lazar, 1993, p. 101).

Ginsberg's poem *Howl* is suitable for older students due to its explicit content. Students should first have a discussion about the life of the Beat Generation writers to have a deeper understanding of Ginsberg's poetry. They should understand their life philosophy and their way of life.

Literature should be a part of foreign language learning. It helps students to learn and practise vocabulary and syntax. The students also get an idea about a life in a foreign country. To keep the students motivated and involved, it is advised to use different kinds of literature. Short stories, novels, plays and poems can all be used in the English classroom.

CONCLUSION

As was mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, the aim was to look for reasons of anger within the British and American society in the 1950s. The work focused on two literary movements which were prominent in the 1950s. These two movements were known as The Angry Young Men and The Beat Generation. The goal was to explain why the people were angry. This thesis searched for similarities and differences between the two movements. Both groups of authors protested against hypocrisy and superficiality.

There were great changes after the World War II which had a considerable impact on the society. Four literary works were selected and analysed in order to explain the people's disillusion and disappointment.

Social issues were of the main concern in Britain, as was reflected in John Osborne's play *Look Back in Anger* and Kingsley Amis' novel *Lucky Jim*. Both literary works are considered as the signature works of The Angry Young Men. Both authors opposed the establishment and criticized the social stratification and social immobility. Criticism of the post-war era and class divisions is evident. Both anti-heroes expressed their anger with the social situation. The root of anger of the main characters came from the disappointment that they had an inferior social status even though they were able to get a university education. Much of the disappointment was caused by the Welfare State policy which was not working as it was planned.

The Beat Generation writers showed their revolt against the mainstream society by leading a life full of drugs, alcohol, spontaneity and their main goal in life was their quest for freedom. This philosophy was described in Jack Kerouac's novel *On the Road* and Allen Ginsberg's poem *Howl*. These two authors became the most influential writers of The Beat Generation. Both literary works express the need for freedom to do whatever the characters

wish. The Beats rejected consumerism and conformity and have had a great influence on young people since the 1950s.

Further research can be suggested as more literary works can be analysed and investigated to look for other authors' views of the British and American society in the 1950s.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Biography of John Osborne

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Appendix 1: Biography of John Osborne

The playwright, actor and Oscar-winning screenwriter, John Osborne, was born on the December 12, 1929, in London. He was one of the most important playwrights of the 1950s. His father, Thomas Godfrey Osborne, came from Newport and worked as a copywriter. He died in 1941 when John was just 11 years old. John's mother, Nellie, worked as a barmaid.

John studied at Belmont College in Devon. He used his father's insurance settlement to finance the private school. After school, he returned to London to live with his mother. He did not go to university but tried to find work as a journalist. He became a theatre stage manager and an actor. He became a member of Anthony Creighton's provincial touring company. Osborne wrote his second play *Personal Enemy* together with Creighton.

Osborne is mostly famous for his play *Look Back in Anger*, which opened at the Royal Court on May 8, 1956. It was revolutionary in a sense that it gave voice to the working class.

Osborne's career continued strong in the 1960s. He won the Academy Award for best Adapted Screenplay for Tony Richardson's movie version of Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* (1963). He is also known for his later plays, such as *Inadmissible Evidence* (1964), *A Patriot for Me* (1965) and *Luther* (1974).

John Osborne was married five times and had 3 children. He divorced four times, the fifth marriage was ended by his death. Besides his marriages, he also had countless affairs. He died from complications of diabetes on December 24, 1994, two weeks after his 65th birthday. He is buried in St. George's churchyard, Shropshire, alongside his last wife, Helen Dawson, who died in 2004.

Source: HOPWOOD, Jon. John Osborne Biography. In: *IMBd* [online]. [cit. 2017-02-04]. Dostupné z: <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0651570/bio>

Appendix 2: Biography of Kingsley Amis

The famous British poet, novelist and lecturer was born on 16 April 1922 in South London. His literary work includes short stories, poetry, books of criticism, food and drinking writing, radio and television scripts and a number of novels in the genre of science fiction and mysteries. His poetry is viewed as anti-romanticism due to its straightforward style. Amis is mostly famous for his novel *Lucky Jim*.

His father, William Robert Amis, worked as a mustard manufacturer's clerk. Kingsley received his primary education from the City of London School and in 1941 he went to St. John's College in Oxford.

He was admitted into army service in 1942, where he served in the Royal Corps of Signals during the World War II. He returned to Oxford after the war and resumed his studies. Kingsley became a member of the Communist Party in 1946.

Amis worked as lecturer at the University of Wales Swansea from 1948 until 1961. This job served as an inspiration for his novel *Lucky Jim*.

Amis got married and divorced twice. He married his first wife Hilary Bardwell in 1948 but got divorced in 1965 due to Kingsley's affairs. He married again the same year but the marriage was not happy and they divorced in 1983. Kingsley fathered three children with Hilary. His son Martin Amis also had a great career as a writer.

Kingsley is famous for a wide variety of literary works. He originally inclined to be a poet but gained recognition as a comedy novelist in his early career.

Kingsley Amis died on 22 October 1995 at a hospital in London.

Source: Kingsley Amis Biography. *Www.thefamouspeople.com* [online]. [cit. 2017-04-18].

Dostupné z: <http://www.thefamouspeople.com/profiles/kingsley-amis-5.php>

Appendix 3: Biography of Jack Kerouac

Jack Kerouac was born on 12 March 1922 in Lowell, Massachusetts, to French-Canadian parents. He was the youngest of three children and was heartbroken when his older brother Gerard died at the age of nine. Jack was very devoted to his mother and formed a lot of important friendships with other boys, which he continued doing throughout his whole life. Even as a child he created stories, inspired by the mysterious radio show *The Shadow*.

Jack's father was a printer and a well-known businessman but had financial difficulties and started gambling in the hope of restoring prosperity of the household. Young Jack got a scholarship to Columbia University in New York due to his football playing. At the University he had arguments with his football coach. He became disillusioned and confused and eventually dropped out of Columbia. He spent a lot of time in New York and met Allen Ginsberg, William Burroughs and Neal Cassady.

Kerouac published his first novel *The Town and the City* with Ginsberg's help who was able to find a publisher for it. He followed Ginsberg and Cassady to San Francisco, where he became close friends with Zen poet Gary Snyder and became interested in the Buddhist religion. The group of writers became known as the Beat Generation.

Kerouac got married twice, to Edie Parker and Joan Haverty but both marriages had ended within a few months. He often fell in love but was unable to keep a steady relationship. Later he married again, this time to his childhood friend Stella Sampas.

Jack Kerouac died on 21 October 1969 in St. Petersburg, Florida. He was 47 years old.

Source: ASHER, Levi. *W*www.beatmuseum.org: *Jack Kerouac Biography* [online]. [cit. 2017-04-18]. Dostupné z: <http://www.beatmuseum.org/kerouac/jackkerouac.html>

Appendix 4: Biography of Allen Ginsberg

Irwin Allen Ginsberg was born on June 3, 1926 in Newark, New Jersey. He grew up in Paterson, New Jersey. His parents, Louis and Naomi Ginsberg, were of Jewish origin. His parents were members of the New York literary counterculture of the 1920s. Naomi Ginsberg was a supporter of the Communist Party and suffered from a mental illness. Naomi's illness gave Allen an enormous empathy and tolerance for madness and neurosis.

As an adolescent, Ginsberg admired Walt Whitman, but later, when he graduated from high school in 1939, Edgar Allan Poe became his favourite poet. After high school he was admitted to Columbia University where he met Jack Kerouac and other personalities of what was later known as the Beat Generation. Even as a young man, Ginsberg always knew he was homosexual. However, he tried dating women and being straight. He actually had a few relationships with several women before freeing himself from the pressure to conform to the heterosexual society. In 1960s he was very active in gay liberation movement.

In 1954, Ginsberg moved to San Francisco and became part of the countercultural Beat movement. He met 21-year-old model Peter Orlovsky, who would become his life partner. They remained together for 43 years, until Ginsberg's death in 1997.

His most famous poetry collection *Howl and Other Poems* was published in 1956, his other well known work is *Kaddish and Other Poems* (1961), *Empty Mirror: Early Poems* (1961), *Reality Sandwiches* (1963), and many others. Ginsberg won the National Book Award in 1974 for his work *The Fall of America: Poems of These States 1965-1971*. Allen Ginsberg died on April 5, 1997, surrounded by family and friends in New York City. The cause of his death was liver cancer, a result of hepatitis. He was 70 years old.

Source: HOPWOOD, Jon. *Allen Ginsberg Biography*. In: *IMBd* [online]. [cit. 2017-03-07].

Dostupné z: <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0320091/bio>

Appendix 5

Lesson plan

Angry Young Men – *Look Back in Anger* by John Osborne

School: ZŠ Hálkova, Olomouc

Class: 8.A

Date: 25.5.2017

The aim: students will be able to discuss the situation in post-war Britain and explain the class issues

Activities: reading for comprehension, group discussion

Pre-reading activity

A short introduction by the teacher about John Osborne, his life and work

The students will discuss the following questions. The teacher will provide explanation and answers where necessary

1. Who were Angry Young Men and why were they angry?
2. When and where was the group of writers prominent?
3. What do you know about the situation in Britain after the World War II?
4. Can you predict what the play is about based on the title?

Reading

Each student will be assigned to read one character of the play. Another student will read the stage notes. Students will read the beginning of Act I of the play (page 8 to 15)

Stage notes: Jimmy and Cliff are seated in two armchairs. They are both reading. Beside them, and between them, is a jungle of newspapers and weeklies. Alison is leaning over an ironing board. Beside her is a pile of clothes. Hanging over the grubby, but expensive, skirt she is wearing is a cherry red shirt of Jimmy's, but she manages somehow to look quite elegant in it.

JIMMY: Why do I do this every Sunday? Even the book reviews seem to be the same as last week's. Different books - same reviews. Have you finished that one yet?

CLIFF: Not yet.

JIMMY: I've just read three whole columns on the English Novel. Half of it's in French.

Do the Sunday papers make you feel ignorant?

CLIFF: Not 'arf.

JIMMY: Well, you are ignorant. You're just a peasant. *(To Alison)* What about you? You're not a peasant are you?

ALISON: *(absently)* What's that?

JIMMY: I said do the papers make you feel you're not so brilliant after all?

ALISON: Oh - I haven't read them yet.

JIMMY: I didn't ask you that. I said -

CLIFF: Leave the poor girlie alone. She's busy.

JIMMY: Well, she can talk, can't she? You can talk, can't you? You can express an opinion. Or does the White Woman's Burden make it impossible to think?

ALISON: I'm sorry. I wasn't listening properly.

JIMMY: You bet you weren't listening. Old Porter talks, and everyone turns over and goes to sleep. And Mrs. Porter gets 'em all going with the first yawn.

CLIFF: Leave her alone, I said.

JIMMY: *(shouting)* All right dear. Go back to sleep. It was only me talking. You know? Talking? Remember? I'm sorry.

CLIFF: Stop yelling. I'm trying to read.

JIMMY: Why do you bother? You can't understand a word of it.

CLIFF: Uh huh.

JIMMY: You're too ignorant.

CLIFF: Yes, and uneducated. Now shut up, will you?

JIMMY: Why don't you get my wife to explain it to you? She's educated. *(To her)* That's right, isn't it?

CLIFF: *(kicking out at him from behind his paper)* Leave her alone, I said.

JIMMY: Do that again, you Welsh ruffian, and I'll pull your ears off.
He bangs Cliff's paper out of his hands.

CLIFF: *(leaning forward)* Listen - I'm trying to better myself. Let me get on with it, you big, horrible man. Give it me. *(Puts his hand out for paper)*

ALISON: Oh, give it to him, Jimmy, for heaven's sake! I can't think!

CLIFF: Yes, come on, give me the paper. She can't think.

JIMMY: Can't think! *(Throws the paper back at him)* She hasn't had a thought for years! Have you?

ALISON: No.

JIMMY: *(Picks up a weekly)* I'm getting hungry.

ALISON: Oh no, not already!

CLIFF: He's a bloody pig.

JIMMY: I'm not a pig. I just like food - that's all.

CLIFF: Like it! You're like a sexual maniac - only with you it's food. You'll end up in the *News of the World*, boyo, you wait James Porter, aged twenty-five, was bound over last week after pleading guilty to interfering with a small cabbage and two tins of beans on his way home from the Builder's Arms. The accused said he hadn't been feeling well for some time, and had been having black-outs. He asked for his good record as an air-raid warden, second class, to be taken into account.

JIMMY: *(Grins)* Oh, yes, yes, yes. I like to eat. I'd like to live too. Do you mind?

CLIFF: Don't see any use in your eating at all. You never get any fatter.

JIMMY: People like me don't get fat. I've tried to tell you before. We just burn everything up. Now shut up while I read. You can make me some more tea.

CLIFF: Good God, you've just had a great potful! I only had one cup.
JIMMY: Like hell! Make some more.
CLIFF: *(to Alison)* Isn't that right? Didn't I only have one cup?
ALISON: *(without looking up)* That's right.
CLIFF: There you are. And she only had one cup too. I saw her. You guzzled the lot.
JIMMY: *(reading his weekly)* Put the kettle on.
CLIFF: Put it on yourself. You've creased my paper.
JIMMY: I'm the only one who knows how to treat a paper, or anything else, in this house. *(Picks up another paper.)* Girl here wants to know whether her boy friend will lose all respect for her if she gives him what he asks for Stupid bitch.
CLIFF: Just let me get at her, that's all.
JIMMY: Who buys this damned thing? *(Throws it down.)* Haven't you read the other posh paper yet?
CLIFF: Which?
JIMMY: Well, there are only two posh papers on a Sunday - the one you're reading, and this one. Come on, let me have that one, and you take this.
CLIFF: Oh, all right.
They exchange
I was only reading the Bishop of Bromley. *(Puts out his hand to Alison)* How are you, dullin'?
ALISON: All right thank you, dear.
JIMMY: *(grasping her hand)* Why don't you leave all that, and sit down for a bit? You look tired.
ALISON: *(smiling)* I haven't much more to do.
CLIFF: *(kisses her hand, and puts her fingers in his mouth)* She's a beautiful girl, isn't she?
JIMMY: That's what they all tell me. *His eyes meet hers.*
CLIFF: It's a lovely, delicious paw you've got. Ummmmm I'm going to bite it off.
ALISON: Don't! I'll burn his shirt.
JIMMY: Give her her finger back, and don't be so sickening. What's the Bishop of Bromley say?
CLIFF: *(letting go of Alison)* Oh, it says here that he makes a very moving appeal to all Christians to do all they can to assist in the manufacture of the H-Bomb.
JIMMY: Yes, well, that's quite moving, I suppose *(To Alison)* Are you moved, my darling?
ALISON: Well, naturally.
JIMMY: There you are: even my wife is moved. I ought to send the Bishop a subscription. Let's see. What else does he say. Dumdidumdidumdidum. Ah yes. He's upset because someone has suggested that he supports the rich against the poor. He says he denies the difference of class distinctions. "This idea has been persistently and wickedly fostered by - the working classes!" Well!
He looks up at both of them for reaction, but Cliff is reading, and Alison is intent on her ironing.
JIMMY: *(to Cliff)* Did you read that bit?
CLIFF: Um?
He has lost them, and he knows it, but he won't leave it.
JIMMY: *(to Alison)* You don't suppose your father could have written it, do you?
ALISON: Written what?

JIMMY: What I just read out, of course.
ALISON: Why should my father have written it?
JIMMY: Sounds rather like Daddy, don't you think?
ALISON: Does it?
JIMMY: Is the Bishop of Bromley his nom de plume, do you think?
CLIFF: Don't take any notice of him. He's being offensive. And it's so easy for him.

After-reading activity

Students will discuss the following questions:

1. What can you say about the personality of each of the characters? (Jimmy, Alison, Cliff)
2. Can you describe the relationship between them?
3. Why does Jimmy verbally attack his wife?
4. Why is Jimmy constantly insulting Cliff?
5. If you could write a similar scene today, what would the people be angry about?
6. Why was the class issue so important in 1950s Britain?

Quiz

1. What is Alison doing in the beginning?

- a) washing dishes
- b) ironing
- c) cleaning the kitchen

2. What is Jimmy reading?

- a) a newspaper
- b) a book
- c) a magazine

3. What day is it in the beginning of the play?

- a) Friday
- b) Tuesday
- c) Sunday

4. What is Alison wearing?

- a) an old sweatshirt
- b) a T-shirt
- c) Jimmy's shirt

5. Where is Jimmy sitting?

- a) on an armchair
- b) on a bed
- c) on a chair

Appendix 6

Lesson plan

The Beat Generation – *On the Road* by Jack Kerouac

School: SŠ Gymnázium Hejčín, Olomouc

Class: 3.A

Date: 24.5.2017

The aim: students will be able to discuss the situation in the United States of America after the World War II and will describe the philosophy and way of life of the Beat Generation

Activities: reading for comprehension, group discussion

Pre-reading activity

A short introduction by the teacher about Jack Kerouac, his life and work

The students will discuss the following questions. The teacher will provide explanation and answers where necessary

1. Who were the Beat Generation writers? Can you name any of them?
2. When and where was the group of writers prominent?
3. What do you know about the United States of America after the World War II?
4. Can you predict what the novel is about based on the title?

Reading

Students will read the beginning of chapter 6 of Part II (page 120 - 128) – at home on their own

It was drizzling and mysterious at the beginning of our journey. I could see that it was all going to be one big saga of the mist. «Whoeee!» yelled Dean. «Here we go!» And he hunched over the wheel and gunned her; he was back in his element, everybody could see that. We were all delighted, we all realized we were leaving confusion and nonsense behind and performing our one and noble function of the time, move.

And we moved! We flashed past the mysterious white signs in the night somewhere in New Jersey that say SOUTH (with an arrow) and WEST (with an arrow) and took the south one. New Orleans! It burned in our brains. From the dirty snows of «frosty fagtown New York,» as Dean called it, all the way to the greeneries and river smells of old New Orleans at the washed-out bottom of America; then west. Ed was in the back seat; Marylou and Dean and I sat in front and had the warmest talk about the goodness and joy of life. Dean suddenly became tender. «Now dammit, look here, all of you, we all must admit that everything is fine

and there's no need in the world to worry, and in fact we should realize what it would mean to us to UNDERSTAND that we're not REALLY worried about ANYTHING. Am I right?» We all agreed. «Here we go, we're all together . . . What did we do in New York? Let's forgive.» We all had our spats back there. «That's behind us, merely by miles and inclinations. Now we're heading down to New Orleans to dig Old Bull Lee and ain't that going to be kicks and listen will you to this old tenorman blow his top» - he shot up the radio volume till the car shuddered - »and listen to him tell the story and put down true relaxation and knowledge.»

We all jumped to the music and agreed. The purity of the road. The white line in the middle of the highway unrolled and hugged our left front tire as if glued to our groove. Dean hunched his muscular neck, T-shirted in the winter night, and blasted the car along. He insisted I drive through Baltimore for traffic practice; that was all right, except he and Marylou insisted on steering while they kissed and fooled around. It was crazy; the radio was on full blast. Dean beat drums on the dashboard till a great sag developed in it; I did too. The poor Hudson - the slow boat to China - was receiving her beating.

«Oh man, what kicks!» yelled Dean. «Now Marylou, listen really, honey, you know that I'm hotrock capable of everything at the same time and I have unlimited energy - now in San Francisco we must go on living together. I know just the place for you - at the end of the regular chain-gang run - I'll be home just a cut-hair less than every two days and for twelve hours at a stretch, and man, you know what we can do in twelve hours, darling. Meanwhile I'll go right on living at Camille's like nothin, see, she won't know. We can work it, we've done it before.» It was all right with Marylou, she was really out for Camille's scalp. The understanding had been that Marylou would switch to me in Frisco, but I now began to see they were going to stick and I was going to be left alone on my butt at the other end of the continent. But why think about that when all the golden land's ahead of you and all kinds of unforeseen events wait lurking to surprise you and make you glad you're alive to see?

We arrived in Washington at dawn. It was the day of Harry Truman's inauguration for his second term. Great displays of war might were lined along Pennsylvania Avenue as we rolled by in our battered boat. There were 6-295, PT boats, artillery, all kinds of war material that looked murderous in the snowy grass; the last thing was a regular small ordinary lifeboat that looked pitiful and foolish. Dean slowed down to look at it. He kept shaking his head in awe. «What are these people up to? Harry's sleeping somewhere in this town. . . . Good old Harry. . . . Man from Missouri, as I am. . . . That must be his own boat.»

Dean went to sleep in the back seat and Dunkel drove. We gave him specific instructions to take it easy. No sooner were we snoring than he gunned the car up to eighty, bad bearings and all, and not only that but he made a triple pass at a spot where a cop was arguing with a motorist - he was in the fourth lane of a four-lane highway, going the wrong way. Naturally the cop took after us with his siren whining. We were stopped. He told us to follow him to the station house. There was a mean cop in there who took an immediate dislike to Dean; he could smell jail all over him. He sent his cohort outdoors to question Marylou and me privately. They wanted to know how old Marylou was, they were trying to whip up a Mann Act idea. But she had her marriage certificate. Then they took me aside alone and wanted to know who was sleeping with Marylou. «Her husband,» I said quite simply. They were curious. Something was fishy. They tried some amateur Sherlocking by asking the same

questions twice, expecting us to make a slip. I said, «Those two fellows are going back to work on the railroad in California, this is the short one's wife, and I'm a friend on a two-week vacation from college.»

The cop smiled and said, «Yeah? Is this really your own wallet?»

Finally the mean one inside fined Dean twenty-five dollars. We told them we only had forty to go all the way to the Coast; they said that made no difference to them. When Dean protested, the mean cop threatened to take him back to Pennsylvania and slap a special charge on him.

«What charge?»

«Never mind what charge. Don't worry about *that*, wiseguy.»

We had to give them the twenty-five. But first Ed Dunkel, that culprit, offered to go to jail. Dean considered it. The cop was infuriated; he said, «If you let your partner go to jail I'm taking you back to Pennsylvania right now. You hear that?» All we wanted to do was go. «Another speeding ticket in Virginia and you lose your car,» said the mean cop as a parting volley. Dean was red in the face. We drove off silently. It was just like an invitation to steal to take our trip-money away from us. They knew we were broke and had no relatives on the road or to wire to for money. The American police are involved in psychological warfare against those Americans who don't frighten them with imposing papers and threats. It's a Victorian police force; it peers out of musty windows and wants to inquire about everything, and can make crimes if the crimes don't exist to its satisfaction. «Nine lines of crime, one of boredom,» said Louis-Ferdinand Céline. Dean was so mad he wanted to come back to Virginia and shoot the cop as soon as he had a gun.

«Pennsylvania!» he scoffed. «I wish I knew what that charge was! Vag, probably; take all my money and charge me vag. Those guys have it so damn easy. They'll out and shoot you if you complain, too.» There was nothing to do but get happy with ourselves again and forget about it. When we got through Richmond we began forgetting about it, and soon everything was okay.

Now we had fifteen dollars to go all the way. We'd have to pick up hitchhikers and bum quarters off them for gas. In the Virginia wilderness suddenly we saw a man walking on the road. Dean zoomed to a stop. I looked back and said he was only a bum and probably didn't have a cent.

«We'll just pick him up for kicks!» Dean laughed. The man was a ragged, bespectacled mad type, walking along reading a paperbacked muddy book he'd found in a culvert by the road. He got in the car and went right on reading; he was incredibly filthy and covered with scabs. He said his name was Hyman Solomon and that he walked all over the USA, knocking and sometimes kicking at Jewish doors and demanding money: «Give me money to eat, I am a Jew.»

He said it worked very well and that it was coming to him. We asked him what he was reading. He didn't know. He didn't bother to look at the title page. He was only looking at the words, as though he had found the real Torah where it belonged, in the wilderness.

«See? See? See?» cackled Dean, poking my ribs. «I told you it was kicks. Everybody's kicks, man!» We carried Solomon all the way to Testament. My brother by now was in his new house on the other side of town. Here we were back on the long, bleak street with the

railroad track running down the middle and the sad, sullen Southerners loping in front of hardware stores and five-and-tens.

Solomon said, «I see you people need a little money to continue your journey. You wait for me and I'll go hustle up a few dollars at a Jewish home and I'll go along with you as far as Alabama.» Dean was all beside himself with happiness; he and I rushed off to buy bread and cheese spread for a lunch in the car. Marylou and Ed waited in the car. We spent two hours in Testament waiting for Solomon to show up; he was hustling for his bread somewhere in town, but we couldn't see him. The sun began to grow red and late.

Solomon never showed up so we roared out of Testament. «Now you see, Sal, God does exist, because we keep getting hung-up with this town, no matter what we try to do, and you'll notice the strange Biblical name of it, and that strange Biblical character who made us stop here once more, and all things tied together all over like rain connecting everybody the world over by chain touch. . . .» Dean rattled on like this; he was overjoyed and exuberant. He and I suddenly saw the whole country like an oyster for us to open; and the pearl was there, the pearl was there. Off we roared south. We picked up another hitchhiker. This was a sad young kid who said he had an aunt who owned a grocery store in Dunn, North Carolina, right outside Fayetteville. «When we get there can you bum a buck off her? Right! Fine! Let's go!» We were in Dunn in an hour, at dusk. We drove to where the kid said his aunt had the grocery store. It was a sad little street that dead-ended at a factory wall. There was a grocery store but there was no aunt. We wondered what the kid was talking about. We asked him how far he was going; he didn't know. It was a big hoax; once upon a time, in some lost back-alley adventure, he had seen the grocery store in Dunn, and it was the first story that popped into his disordered, feverish mind. We bought him a hot dog, but Dean said we couldn't take him along because we needed room to sleep and room for hitchhikers who could buy a little gas. This was sad but true. We left him in Dunn at nightfall.

I drove through South Carolina and beyond Macon, Georgia, as Dean, Marylou, and Ed slept. All alone in the night I had my own thoughts and held the car to the white line in the holy road. What was I doing? Where was I going? I'd soon find out. I got dog-tired beyond Macon and woke up Dean to resume. We got out of the car for air and suddenly both of us were stoned with joy to realize that in the darkness all around us was fragrant green grass and the smell of fresh manure and warm waters. «We're in the South! We've left the winter!» Faint daybreak illuminated green shoots by the side of the road. I took a deep breath; a locomotive howled across-the darkness, Mobilebound. So were we. I took off my shirt and exulted. Ten miles down the road Dean drove into a filling-station with the motor off, noticed that the attendant was fast asleep at the desk, jumped out, quietly filled the gas tank, saw to it the bell didn't ring, and rolled off like an Arab with a five-dollar tankful of gas for our pilgrimage.

I slept and woke up to the crazy exultant sounds of music and Dean and Marylou talking and the great green land rolling by. «Where are we?»

«Just passed the tip of Florida, man - Flomaton, it's called.» Florida! We were rolling down to the coastal plain and Mobile; up ahead were great soaring clouds of the Gulf of Mexico. It was only thirty-two hours since we'd said good-by to everybody in the dirty snows of the North. We stopped at a gas station, and there Dean and Marylou played piggyback

around the tanks and Dunkel went inside and stole three packs of cigarettes without trying. We were fresh out. Rolling into Mobile over the long tidal highway, we all took our winter clothes off and enjoyed the Southern temperature. This was when Dean started telling his life story and when, beyond Mobile, he came upon an obstruction of wrangling cars at a crossroads and instead of slipping around them just balled right through the driveway of a gas station and went right on without relaxing his steady continental seventy. We left gaping faces behind us. He went right on with his tale. «I tell you it's true, I started at nine, with a girl called Milly Mayfair in back of Rod's garage on Grant Street - same street Carlo lived on in Denver. That's when my father was still working at the smithy's a bit. I remember my aunt yelling out the window, 'What are you doing down there in back of the garage?' Oh honey Marylou, if I'd only known you then! Wow! How sweet you musta been at nine.» He tittered maniacally; he stuck his finger in her mouth and licked it; he took her hand and rubbed it over himself. She just sat there, smiling serenely.

Big long Ed Dunkel sat looking out the window, talking to himself. «Yes sir, I thought I was a ghost that night.» He was also wondering what Galatea Dunkel would say to him in New Orleans.

Dean went on. «One time I rode a freight from New Mexico clear to LA - I was eleven years old, lost my father at a siding, we were all in a hobo jungle, I was with a man called Big Red, my father was out drunk in a boxcar - it started to roll - Big Red and I missed it - I didn't see my father for months. I rode a long freight all the way to California, really flying, first-class freight, a desert Zipper. All the way I rode over the couplings - you can imagine how dangerous, I was only a kid, I didn't know - clutching a loaf of bread under one arm and the other hooked around the brake bar. This is no story, this is true. When I got to LA I was so starved for milk and cream I got a job in a dairy and the first thing I did I drank two quarts of heavy cream and puked.»

«Poor Dean,» said Marylou, and she kissed him. He stared ahead proudly. He loved her.

We were suddenly driving along the blue waters of the Gulf, and at the same time a momentous mad thing began on the radio; it was the Chicken Jazz'n Gumbo disk-jockey show from New Orleans, all mad jazz records, colored records, with the disk jockey saying, «Don't worry about *nothing!*» We saw New Orleans in the night ahead of us with joy. Dean rubbed his hands over the wheel. «Now we're going to get our kicks!» At dusk we were coming into the humming streets of New Orleans. «Oh, smell the people!» yelled Dean with his face out the window, sniffing. «Ah! God! Life!» He swung around a trolley. «Yes!» He darted the car and looked in every direction for girls. «Look at *her!*» The air was so sweet in New Orleans it seemed to come in soft bandannas; and you could smell the river and really smell the people, and mud, and molasses, and every kind of tropical exhalation with your nose suddenly removed from the dry ices of a Northern winter. We bounced in our seats. «And dig her!» yelled Dean, pointing at another woman. «Oh, I love, love, love women! I think women are wonderful! I love women!» He spat out the window; he groaned; he clutched his head. Great beads of sweat fell from his forehead from pure excitement and exhaustion.

We bounced the car up on the Algiers ferry and found ourselves crossing the Mississippi River by boat. «Now we must all get out and dig the river and the people and smell the

world,» said Dean, bustling with his sunglasses and cigarettes and leaping out of the car like a jack-in-the-box. We followed.

On rails we leaned and looked at the great brown father of waters rolling down from mid-America like the torrent of broken souls - bearing Montana logs and Dakota muds and Iowa vales and things that had drowned in Three Forks, where the secret began in ice. Smoky New Orleans receded on one side; old, sleepy Algiers with its warped woodsidess bumped us on the other. Negroes were working in the hot afternoon, stoking the ferry furnaces that burned red and made our tires smell. Dean dug them, hopping up and down in the heat. He rushed around the deck and upstairs with his baggy pants hanging halfway down his belly. Suddenly I saw him eagering on the flying bridge. I expected him to take off on wings. I heard his mad laugh all over the boat - »Hee-hee-hee-hee-hee!« Marylou was with him. He covered everything in a jiffy, came back with the full story, jumped in the car just as everybody was tooting to go, and we slipped off, passing two or three cars in a narrow space, and found ourselves darting through Algiers.

After-reading activity (the following lesson)

Students will discuss the following questions:

1. What can you say about the personality of each of the characters? (Sal, Dean)
2. Can you describe the relationship between them?
3. Why does Sal and Dean travel so much?
4. If you could travel anywhere, where would you go and why?
5. Who would you like to travel with?
6. What kind of problems can you expect on the road?

Quiz

1. Where is Sal and his friends travelling?

- a) New York
- b) New Orleans
- c) New Hampshire

2. Who are they going to see when they get there?

- a) Old Bill
- b) Old Benny
- c) Old Bull Lee

3. Which American president was inaugurated at that time for his second term?

- a) Harry Truman
- b) Dwight Eisenhower
- c) Franklin Roosevelt

4. How high was the fine they had to pay to the police?

- a) 15 dollars
- b) 25 dollars
- c) 35 dollars

5. What river do they cross on their way?

- a) Missouri
- b) Mississippi
- c) Minnesota

RESUMÉ

Diplomová práce se zabývá situací ve společnosti ve Velké Británii a ve Spojených státech amerických v 50. letech 20. století. Důraz je kladen na sociální otázky a jejich dopad na literární tvorbu. Rozhněvaní mladí muži i beatnici kritizují soudobou společnost. Ve Velké Británii se autoři zabývají problémy společenského postavení, vzdělání a nerovnosti společenských tříd. Beatnici ve Spojených státech kritizují společnost pro svou konformnost a konzumní způsob života. Autoři obou literárních hnutí vyjadřují svůj nesouhlas ve své literární tvorbě.

Anotace

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Název práce:	Proč byli lidé rozhněvaní? Rozhněvaní mladí muži a beatníci
Název v angličtině:	Why Were the People Angry? Angry Young Men and Beats
Anotace práce:	Diplomová práce se zabývá společenskou situací a literární tvorbou ve Velké Británii a ve Spojených státech amerických v 50. letech 20. století. Práce zkoumá důvody k nespokojenosti dvou skupin autorů, známých jako rozhněvaní mladí muži a beatníci.
Klíčová slova:	rozčarování, hněv, zklamání, sociální status, společenská třída, svoboda, revolta, vzdělání, rozhněvaní mladí muži, beatníci
Anotace v angličtině:	The thesis deals with the social situation and literary works in Great Britain and in the United States of America in the 1950s. This work investigates the reasons for disappointment of two groups of authors, commonly referred to as the Angry Young Men and the Beat Generation.
Klíčová slova v angličtině:	disillusionment, anger, disappointment, social status, social class, freedom, revolt, education, Angry Young Men, the Beat Generation
Přílohy vázané v práci:	Appendix 1: Biography of John Osborne Appendix 2: Biography of Kingsley Amis Appendix 3: Biography of Jack Kerouac Appendix 4: Biography of Allen Ginsberg Appendix 5: Lesson plan - <i>Look Back in Anger</i> Appendix 6: Lesson plan - <i>On the Road</i>
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