

## Chapter 1.

### Introduction

The research focuses on Jack Kerouac's Beat Generation prose manifesto *On the Road* (1957) by analyzing the writer's mentality that presents the non-West as strange, colorful, unusual, primitive and uncivilized. In short, the work exoticizes the other, i. e. the non-West by making the main characters move around whole America in the search of open sexual involvement, intoxication and mystic experience that are also the adjectives used for the description of the non-Western locales.

The West has grown in itself tendency to represent the non-West as the inferior entity. In many spheres of life, such practice is manifest. In order to carry out this task, certain images about the non-West are made in various fields of intellectual life of the West and such images are propagated. Besides, they become an authentic means to understand and evaluate the people and their cultural practices. One of such practices comprises of representing the other as inherently exotic. The arrogant Western attitude takes the other as its shadow. Similarly, the cultural practices in other regions than the West are supposed to be primitive in the derogatory sense of the word. Along with these things even the works of art like novels have a chief means to justify the egotism in that the depiction the non-Western aspects of the society either becomes a matter of the past\_suggesting the sense of being primitive or far away from the touch of modern sensibility, or works as a chief dimension to assert the Western superiority.

Even in the novels of the marginal writers like Jack Kerouac who belongs to the counter-culture, viz. the beat, the practice has got due position in that the developing world is the pure one for him. Although it is impossible to find a pure world with complete promise of freedom and thereby liberation from the ugliness of life, he thinks that the non-Western locations like Lasha and Benaras can be the best places to find emancipation from the horrors of the capitalist world in the US of the 1950s. The post-War society shows the Beat writers the evil of the capitalistic development. However, they fail to understand the general human nature that capitalism is the in-built tendency in every human being and hence one cannot move away from it. Instead of making the best of the efforts to decipher the real situation and the human psyche, Kerouac –kind of writers exoticize the non-West without taking notice of what they are doing.

### **1.1. Exoticism: Theory and practice**

Exoticism derived from the word 'exotic' ('Exo' from Greek meaning 'outside') simply means the attraction and 'the charm of the unfamiliar.' It means to present any places or things in such way that people find it mysterious and strange. In short, it refers to the estrangement of anything. The Oxford dictionary defines the word exoticism as the "act of representing anything or place as unusual, colorful and introduced from abroad." Similarly, scholar Alden Jones defines exoticism in art and literature on cultural ground. He defines it as the "representation of one culture for the consumption by another." Here, he focuses on the culture, which is defined and

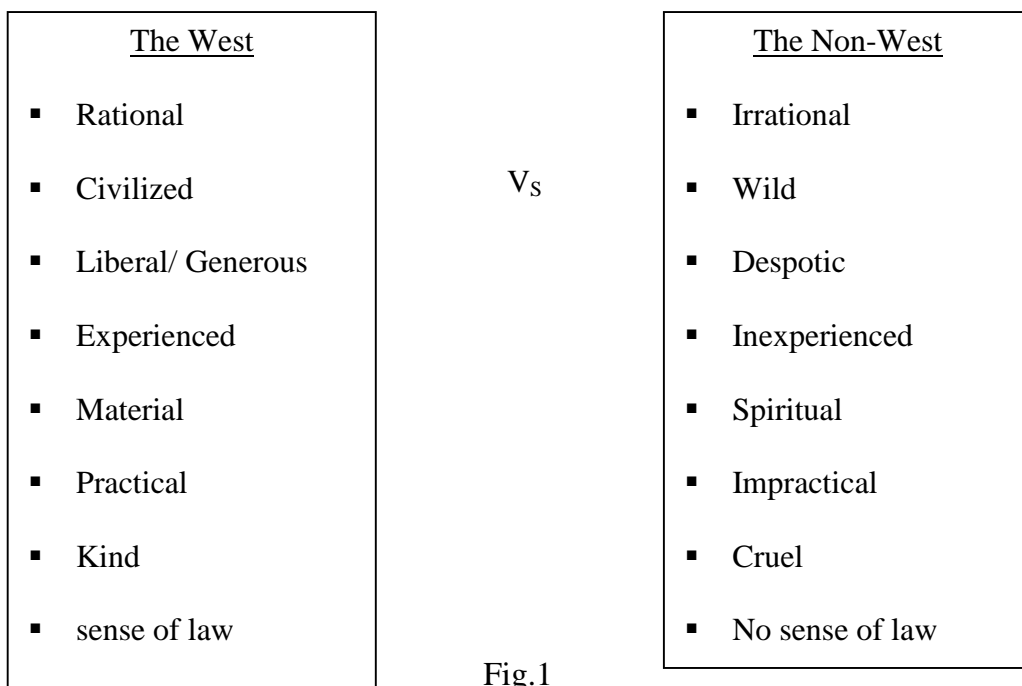
described, by another culture in terms of dichotomies so as to present it to the people for pleasure and entertainment.

In the field of music, exoticism refers to a genre in which the rhythms, melodies or instrumentation are amalgamated to evoke the environment of far-off lands or ancient times. Another facet of exoticism in literature is to present the dividing line between non-West and West with the help of binary oppositions and dichotomies to show and prove the Western superiority over the non-West. The non-West has been made surrogate and even backgrounded itself to prove the West superior. As a historical and cultural enterprise, it has established a series of binary opposition between West and Non-West. The instant example of the Western mentality about the East or non-West can be seen in Lord Crowder's *Modern Egypt*. He writes:

The European is a close reasoned; his statement of fact are devoid of any ambiguity; he is a natural logician albeit may not have studied logic; he is by nature skeptical and requires proof before he can accept the truth of any proposition; his trained intelligence works like a piece of mechanism. The mind of the oriental, on the other hand, like his picturesque streets, is eminently wanting in symmetry. His reasoning is of the most slipshod description. Although the ancient Arabs acquired in a somewhat higher degree the science of dialects, their descendants are singularly deficient in the logical faculty. They are often in capable of drawing the most obvious conclusion from any simple premises of which they may admit the truth. Endeavor the enticed a plain statement

of facts from any ordinary Egyptian. His explanation will generally be lengthy, and wanting in lucidity. He will probably contradict himself half a dozen times before he has finished his story. He will often break down under the mildest process of cross-examination. (qtd. in Said 38)

It is indeed the biased and prejudice view about the orient. Based on Crowder's view about the Egyptians, we can draw the binary opposition and dichotomies about the West and non-West, which is blueprinted by and in the Westerner's in their mind.



To present or to assume the Non-West in the terms of the above dichotomies and binary opposition too is the exotic practice of the West. Both the writer and the artist of the West try to misrepresent the non-West for the entertainment of the Easterner. Such a practice is none other than cultural violation. In addition to this, to see the non-West as the place of pleasure and romance is yet another dimension of

exoticism. Westerners always assume the non-Western humanity and civilization are in their infancy. An archetypal example of such thinking can be seen in the proverb expressed by the artist and writer Paul Gauguin who worked to present the Tahitian people and landscape for French audiences and readers.

According to Paul Gauguin, the Non-West humanity is primitive which the result of Westerner's biased mentality is indeed. Paul Gauguin's attitude towards the Tahitian people's landscape and culture has a close affinity to the description of exoticism by Scholar Alden Jones. In one of his paintings, Gauguin depicts a Tahitian woman stark naked which is later on praised by a European, Traewin Coppelstone, in mellifluous words as:

For European the romantic strangeness and exoticism of his painting of the islanders, the festivities with their unknown symbolism are inherently attractive and this has tended to obscure Gauguin's real contribution. The quality of his art does not reside in revelation of another culture but in the aesthetic position he arrived at. (52)

Gauguin represented the Tahitian culture for the consumption by the French. His misrepresentation of the Tahitian people fueled by biased mentality is the aesthetic contribution to the Europeans. It also proves that the West see the rest as "the place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscape, remarkable" experiences (Said 1).

The act of exoticizing the non-West dates back to the seventeenth century Europe with the help of increased travel and explanation outside Europe to the East,

which has a clear reflection of it in the contemporary literature. In the 19th century- the postcolonial time, the Europeans tried to de-mystify or de-exoticize non-European culture that resided in the creation of otherness and the territories outside was portrayed as mysterious. The postcolonial concept of exoticism was the process in which the exotic was domesticated while continuing to render, foreign people, object and place strange. Europe was naturalized while the rest of the world exoticized, thus the dominant culture defining the marginal in its own terms. This concept was not restricted to Europe: the people of colonized countries surrendered to the missions from the West and came to regard their own domestic surroundings as exotic.

Therefore, exoticism in the nineteenth century, according to Graham Huggan, is “the cure of difference while protecting its practitioner from close involvement” (22).

In the twentieth century, 'exoticism' was taken to present the West and the non-West in the dichotomy of 'core' and 'peripheral'. The West was supposed to be the core and the rest of the world, the peripheral. Although this concept of centre, margin and periphery is prevalent in the modernist writing, it was in practice before the twentieth century. The phenomenon of othering was prevalent in the colonial literature. As shown below, the eighteenth and nineteenth century literature, representing the then British mentality, portrayed the surrounding world in dualistic terms. The grounds of othering were laid by stiff rules of conduct, the propriety of behavior, appearance, origin as well as hierarchy and alienation. All this snobbish frame of mind helped establish a mindset based on binary oppositions, where the center was equated to the norm, which was the Western culture, while the periphery

meant everything else. To illustrate this dualistic view and strict colonial and patronizing approach of other culture, writers like Daniel Defoe, Rudyard Kipling, Oscar Wilde, and E.M. Forster played a vital role.

Defoe's adventure novel *Robinson Crusoe* is a fine example of how distant countries were perceived by the colonizers. The environment into which they arrive is portrayed as unknown and dangerous and one can easily get lost in its vast space. The terra nova is also full of colorful vegetation and resembles the gardens of Eden. The new surroundings are not only unfamiliar, but also menacing. By contracting the setting with the home country, a clear distinction between center and periphery is made. Further, we come to see that the inhabitants of the future colonies are not treated as human beings who are equal to colonizers: they are rather inferior to Europeans. There is a plenty of evidence in *Robinson Crusoe* showing that the colonizer's superiority was obvious, thus pushing the colonized aside to the margin. Robinson Crusoe had a gun that made the poor creature obey and respect him. Defoe writes:

It is impossible to express the Astonishment of these poor creatures at the Noise of my Gun, some of them was even ready to dye of fear, and fell down as Dead with the very Terror. However, after they saw the creature dead and sunk in the water they drag'd him on shore and found that it was a most curious leopard the Negroes held up their Hands with admiration. (32)

Crusoe's approach towards Africans can be seen in terms of cultural violation:

M Friday, his slave, gets his name from the day on which he is found. He is never asked his real name. Moreover, Robinson never bothers to learn a word in Friday's language. Similarly, the new species of flora and fauna are given English name. In fact, it is Friday who learns English in order to communicate with Crusoe. The native people are not only portrayed as unintelligent creatures who exchange beads for gold, but also as trading well themselves. He writes:

Voyages to the coast of Guinea, the manner of Trading with the Negroes there, and how easy. It was to purchase upon the coast, for trifles such as Beads, toys, knives and the like; not only Gold, Dust, Elephant Teeth, but Negroes for the service of Brazils in great numbers. (42)

Another example of the text confirming the presence of division between the Western civilization as common, usual and center, and all the other as exotic, unusual and peripheral is George Orwell's essay *Shooting an Elephant*. The Burmese people are depicted as helpless and meek creatures that wait for a *savoir\_a* Western Messiah, to be defended against the attack of an elephant. It is an obvious example of the Western mentality to present the West as superior the other as inferior. Moreover, the writer's opinion about the East is heavily loaded with prejudice and bias when he writes, "That is invariably the case in the East; a story always sounds clear enough at a distance, but the nearer you get to the scene of events the vaguer it becomes" (10) He represents the Burmese people as inhuman, illogical, mindless and cruel. He tries

to undermine the cultural importance of an elephant among the Easterners and depicts them as crazy of killing it for meat. He writes:

They had seen the rifle and were all shouting excitedly that I was going to shoot the elephant. They hadn't shown much interest in the elephant when he was merely ravaging their homes, but it was different now that he was going to be shot. It was a bit of fun to them, as it would be to an English crowd besides they wanted the meat. (80)

Such remarks, obviously, are an out come of cultural misunderstanding and attempt to portray the Burmese society and people as killing, hungry and crazy. He further exoticizes the Burmese people and society with the counter-description of his compatriot and says that the Burmese lack this quality when he says:

A sahib has got to act like a sahib; he has to appear resolute, he knows his own mind and do definite things. To come all that way, rifle in hand, with two thousand people marching at my heels and then to trail feebly away, have done nothing\_no, that was impossible. The crowd would laugh at me. In addition, my whole life, every white men's life in the east, was one long struggle not to be laughed at. (79)

This description of the then Burmese society is infused by the writer's snobbish attitude of white men in the east. To fortify his stand further, he exoticizes the Burmese. He tends to presents the white man resolute and dignified in the Burmese mob by exoticizing it.

Similarly, E.M. Forster's 1924 *A Passage to India*, an exemplary work in exoticizing then Non- West, is another text advocating that the non-West is exotic and uncivilized. India is portrayed as an uncivilized and undeveloped place where people lack etiquette. The very opening of the book defines Chandrapore as:

Except for the Marabar cave\_ and they are twenty miles off-the city of Chandra pore presents nothing extra ordinary. Edged rather than washed by the river Ganges, it trails for a couple of miles along the bank scarcely distinguishable from the rubbish it deposits so freely. They are no bathing steps on the river, as the Ganges happens not to be holy here; indeed there is no riverfront and bazaars shut out the wide and shifting panorama of the stream. The streets are mean, the temples ineffective and though a few fine houses exist, they are hidden away in gardens or down alleys whose filth deters all but the invited guest. (1)

The writer very clearly states that he knows that Chandrapore has some beautiful places but he chooses to describe the bad and filthy part of the town in order to present it as unusual and uncommon to the Western readers. This is an explicit example of writer's mentality to exoticize Chanderpore by representing it as an inferior, dirty and undeveloped city in terms of its environment. He even finds the sky over Chandrapore different and unusual. He uses some mellifluous words to evoke the environment of far-off land to put the exotic imagination in the readers mind. He writes:

The sky too had its changes, but they are less marked than those of the vegetation and the river. Clouds map it up at times, but it is normally a dome of blending tints and the main tint blue. By day, the blue will pale down into white where it touches the white of the land, after sunset it has a new circumference orange, meeting upwards into tenderest purple.

(3)

To see the simple and same sky different and uncommon is, indeed the writers attempt to exoticize Chandrapore. The writer seems to have agreed with the definition of the exotic as the charm of the unfamiliar. The simple sky looks charming to him as it belongs to the land where different culture and civilization exist.

In the same way Rudyard Kipling's novel *Kim* also has due position to represent the non-West as exotic and mysterious. Presented as a picaresque novel, it tries to explore the entrails of India through the journey of Tesoo Lama and Kim to the nooks and corners of the country. Teshoo Lama's quest for the River of Knowledge itself is the exotic act and setting it in India emerges from the writer's mentality to mystify and exoticize it. In this book, Indian cities and villages are described as undeveloped and wild. He also presents the Indian society fragmented in the terms of religion and caste. He further mystifies it as the living place of the conservative and orthodox people who believe in stars and prophecy. At one point, Kim tries to justify the power-relation between the West and non-West when he tells Teshoo Lama that "All earth would have picked thy bones within ten mile of Lahore city if I had not guarded thee" (53).

Though Kim takes himself as a disciple of the Lama, he tries to show himself as powerful and devoted than the Lama. It is indeed an expression of the writer's mentality to take the Easterners as weak and helpless. Besides, the writer shows the distinction between the West and East by making a white (Kim) and an Easterner (Lama) journey together. With the help of the Lama, he tries to show that the Easterners are too much spiritual, illogical, and irrational where as the Westerners, just the opposite.

These instances lead to the conclusion that exoticism as a literary tool has a due position in the Western literature, which tries to depict the non-West not only as uncommon, unfamiliar, and colorful but also inferior and uncivilized with the help of dichotomies and binary opposition.

## **1.2. Non-West as a Category**

To understand the non-West, firstly, it is essential to know about the West as it is the mere propagation of the arrogant Western mind which presents the culture, religion, and area beyond their understanding and access as unfamiliar, exotic and uncivilized. Thus, the area, culture and religion that don not belong to the West can be taken as the non-West.

Geographically, the West is basically defined as Europe and its former settler colonies, such as the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the like. Yet, Latin America, conquered, settled, and colonized by Europeans, is treated as a separate civilization all its own, even though most of the Latin American people speak Spanish,

Portuguese and English, and worship the Christian God. The Slav –Orthodox World of Russia, the Ukraine and portions of the Balkans are also treated as distinct civilization, despite its close proximity to the rest of Europe, its history of interaction with the countries to its west over many centuries and the fact that its people also embrace a branch of Christianity.

### **1.3. Hypothesis**

The question of representation of the non-West in the Western masterpieces is a matter of debate for a long time. While examining such political issues in *On the Road*, the exotic depiction of the non-Western locales may be found to be the Western bias against the non-West. Perhaps the creation of the Arab image and the intoxicated Chinese figures may be the result of the biased mindset of the West manifest on the surface of the novel. Similarly, the holiness of the Lhasa and Benaras may be the result of the orientalist practice on the part of the author in depicting the non-West.

### **1.4. Findings**

The rationality of the West, as it is generally understood in their location, remains incomplete unless the non-West is taken as irrational. Thus, in center/periphery binary, the West assumes its bogus position of the former, thereby marginalizing the non-West. In order to justify the marginal position of the non-West, various discourses of the West always strive towards illustrating it as an exotic space. For one thing, the spatial dimension as propagated in the Western texts about the non-

West does not bear any foundation in reality. Similarly, the Arabian, Indian, and Chinese people and their land are always a matter to marvel at. Such exoticization as the Western mission has become a weapon for them in that it helps command the global power for them. In addition, the construction of such images has helped the West justify its rational of domination in colonial and postcolonial capitalist eras. Thus, such exoticization of the non-West is the political activity of the Western psyche to inculcate and enhance the political interest and dominate the non-West economically and politically at the same time.

## Chapter 2.

### **Orient, Orientalism, and Fiction**

The West and non-West relationship is not sound as many people think. The bad waves of such relationship are manifest in various forms of cultural productions. For one thing, the West takes the non-West as its inferior shadow that is emotionally weak and feminine in its nature. For the other, these notions about the non-West are just the mental construction produced out of the biasness it has developed in the long run of development of its culture. Now, it has become the way of life for the Western mind to show the Orient and the non-West for that matter inferior by exoticizing the land and people in the works of fictions. As a matter of fact, such kind of misrepresentation of the non-West is taken, for long, as the product of the Western rationality that is itself founded on the bogus notion of the Western arrogance of being the center of rationality and by the same token, civilization.

The non-Western is inferiorized in various discourses of Western psyche. Fiction has always worked as one of such discourses that helps to create and perpetuate the power of domination for the West. Thus, it has become a means to justify the rationale of domination of European psyche over others. In other words, fiction has supported the rationale of Western domination over the non-Western geography and people along with their culture with the help of exotic presentation of these things in life and society alike. Thus, fiction becomes stronger than the gunpowder in that it has ability to distort the reality with the help of creative potential that every language bears

with in it. Also, the fiction as a tool of domination creates certain images about the *Other* and these images, after gaining power become so dominant that they are used to justify the inferiority of the non-West in front of the West.

## **2.1. Exotic Land as Mental Construction**

The non-Western geography for the Western mindset is itself mysterious thing. What is not theirs is what turns to be the mystic thing for them. Also, the West prioritizes their land as the supreme geography, whereby othering of the non-Western locale begins. In the time-space continuum of thinking, such othering begins right from the Greek thought. For the Greeks, people from outside were not perfect human beings. When this idea was passed onto the succeeding Romans, the whole Roman Empire obtained this Greek arrogance. With the industrial development, the Western Europe later inherited the Greek bias. Thus, such exoticization of the Orient is rooted in the Greek thought.

Basically, the exoticization in English literature begins with the Romanticism. English Romantic poets like Samuel Taylor Coleridge and John Keats have depicted mystic non-West in their works. Furthermore, they were as fascinated by the medievalism as by the Orient; therefore, they form and enhance a bias against the non-Western land. “A seminal mind” (Daiches 899), Coleridge exoticizes the Orient in “Kubla Khan” that is subtitled as “*Or a Vision in a Dream. A Fragment.*” But the way he presents the land and the atmosphere of the palace and its surroundings is

really mesmerizing to the non-Western consciousness. In fact, he paralyses the oriental geography by mystifying it. He writes:

But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted

Down the green hill athwart a cedar cover!

A savage place! as holy and enchanted

As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted (11-15)

The land is savage, holy, enchanted, and haunted for the poet. In fact, the romantic chasm does not happen but is consciously created by such seminal minds.

Similarly, Keats finds equivalent of the oriental geography in the medievalism of Europe. That is, the West always believes that the non-West is both back in both time and space. That the non-West is mysterious since it lags behind in time is the permanently working logic of the West. Daiches calls him Romantic for “his feeling for the Middle Ages” (915). As a revolting genius of the era, he is attracted to pagan gods/goddesses and thus exoticizes the whole of the non-West by the same token. In “Ode on Melancholy,” he says:

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,

Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards

But in viewless wings of Poesy,

Though the dull brain perplexes and retards. (31-4)

The pagan god Bacchus, later baptized into the Greek Pantheon, is treated as servant whose service is refused. Also, such practice leads them to uphold the notions that the non-West is the inferior Other, so it must be worked upon to create a mystic or

shadowy locale. In this connection, Edward Said asserts that the Orient is created out of the “essential motifs of European imaginative geography.” He further states:

A line is drawn between two continents. Europe is the powerful and articulate; Asia is defeated and distant.[...] It is Europe that articulates the Orient; this articulation is the prerogative, not of a puppet master, but of a genuine creator, whose life-giving power represents, animates, constitutes the otherwise silent and dangerous space beyond familiar boundaries. (*Orientalism* 57)

To be more specific, the non-Western geography as propagated in and by the non-Western texts refers to no reality. It is the product of the arrogance of the Western mindset that believes in its own superiority.

Besides, E. M. Forster’s 1924 novel *A Passage to India* depicts Indian geography as the most exotic one. However, *Dachies* focuses on the human relationships as its theme. He writes:

Forster had one theme –human relationships –and when he had exhausted it on fiction he wrote no novels. He is the great spokesman for an idea of human behaviour and a concern with human relationships which were characteristic of certain circles of Cambridge in the early years of the twentieth century, he is also the inheritor of a nineteenth –century tradition of high minded religious benevolence –and he is a literary artist with a strong sense of esthetic form. His novels reflect these ... aspects of life and character. (1158)

On the contrary, *A Passage to India* shows India as the mysterious land where anything can happen. Whatever happens happens because of the exotic quality of the land. As in Kipling's *Kim*, the human relationships are primary but at the cost of the natural flow and beauty of geography, Forster makes the land responsible to shield the ignorance of the white characters. Miss Andela Quested is psychologically disturbed because the Marabar Caves, as implied in the novel, are haunting. Despite presenting the innocence of a European maid, Forster goes on to describe the caves and echo in it. He states:

There are some exquisite echoes in India; there is the whisper round the Dome at Bijapur ... The echo in a Marabar cave is not like these, it is entirely devoid of distinction. Whatever is said, the same monotonous noise replies, and quivers up and down the walls until it is absorbed into the roof ... Even the striking of a match starts a little worm coiling, which is too small to complete a circle, but is eternally watchful. And if several people talk at once, an overlapping howling noise begins, echoes generate echoes, and the cave is stuffed with a snake composed of small snakes, which writhe independently. (145)

Amazingly enough, he describes the Indian geography in order to justify his claim that the land is supernatural. That is, India possesses some esoteric haunting qualities.

Moreover, the sound is metaphorically described as the snake of small snakes. For an English man to focus on such metaphor is to depict some unnatural elements of the land. Specifically, he exoticizes the land by bringing together typical figures associated with evil and sin in Christianity and the people living in the land.

The canonical works of literature in the West manipulate the non-Western geography and create a different locale that becomes real for them. This Western politics is a tool of misrepresentation in that the land and people are exoticized as they wish to see the non-West. Such practice serves to make the foundations of the West stronger. Hans Bertens mentions:

The sensuality, irrationality, primitiveness, and despotism of the East constructs the West as rational, democratic, progressive, and so on. The West always functions as the 'centre' and the East is a marginal 'other' that simply through its existence confirms the West's centrality and superiority. (205)

The exoticization of the Eastern land is the mental phenomenon of the West. What they understand as the non-West is not what it is in reality. Thus, the exotic land is nothing more than the imaginative geography of the West.

## **2.2. Mystery as the Result of Failure of Understanding**

Mystery has its roots in the failure to understand an entity/idea properly. In the course of making attempts to decipher an idea, mystery emerges after the subject proves but refuses to be named failure. Historians and literary artists have called the East mysterious and mystic land as the result of their own inadequate knowledge of these locales. It becomes easier to turn the pages of the books produced by the predecessors than to go to the East to understand the reality. Also, calling the land and

its culture along with the peoples feminine, tyrannical, mystic, and exotic helps justify the West of being what all affirmative adjectives can qualify.

The inability to understand and respect others' cultures leads to form wrong judgment about them. For instance, literary historian, William J. Long thinks that the Oriental people are backward because they could not develop poetry. He writes:

Oriental peoples built monuments to perpetuate the memory of their dead; but our ancestors made poems which should love and stir men's souls long after monuments of bricks and stone had crumbled away. It is to this intense love of glory and the desire to be remembered that we are indebted for Anglo-Saxon literature. (27)

The historian displays nothing more than the Western arrogance in that the Assyrians were the first people to develop writing and it was in China that printing press was invented. These two simple facts of history are adequate enough to claim that the poetry existed in the East before the West developed any organized social form. Such historians work towards maintaining what they have inherited from their ancestors, by further making the powerful statements to justify the central role of the West in determining the standard of any culture.

Enigma is further propagated with the help of religion of the East. All that the West does is to depict the Eastern religion as inferior one. For instance, in *A Passage to India*, Forster inferiorizes the Sanatan religion thus:

‘Bad, bad you have destroyed me.’

‘Godbole’s pujah did it,’ cried the Englishman.

The Brahman lowered his eyes, ashamed of religion. For it was so: he has miscalculated the length of a prayer. (130)

Such ideas are taken, when propagated through cultural productions like novels, as the most valid ones, and used to further estimate and justify the nature of the people on the whole. There is no ground for the Brahmin to be ashamed of his religion and lower his eyes in front of an Englishman simply because he comes from *pujah*. How can Forster write that the Brahmin miscalculated the time of his prayer? To judge the length of time assuming the length of Christian prayer as the yardstick is a fallacy in itself. Yet, this fallacy becomes insignificant and the logic turns to be valid for Orientalist critics who later judge the work as worthwhile. By passing value judgments on such cultural productions as valid ones, they are promoting the mystic and mysterious nature of the East.

Like the followers of the Sanatan religion, Islamic people have also turned to be mysterious ones because they are also the part of the West's other. They have always looked at Islam through the lenses of Christianity. Said rightly points out:

One constraint acting upon Christian thinkers who tried to understand Islam was an analogical one; since Christ is the basis of Christian faith, it was assumed –quite incorrectly –that Mohammed was to Islam as Christ was to Christianity. Hence the polemic name “Mohammedianism” given to Islam, and the automatic epithet “imposter” applied to Mohammed. Out of such and many other misconceptions, “there formed a circle which was never broken by

imaginative exteriorisation.... The Christian concept of Islam was integral and self-sufficient.” (60)

Thus, Islam is mystified by taking Christianity the basis to evaluate it. The culture and religion of one people should and must not be endeavored to compare to each other in absolute terms. This practice has caused much harm to the way the West understands the non-West. The following diagram illustrates more:

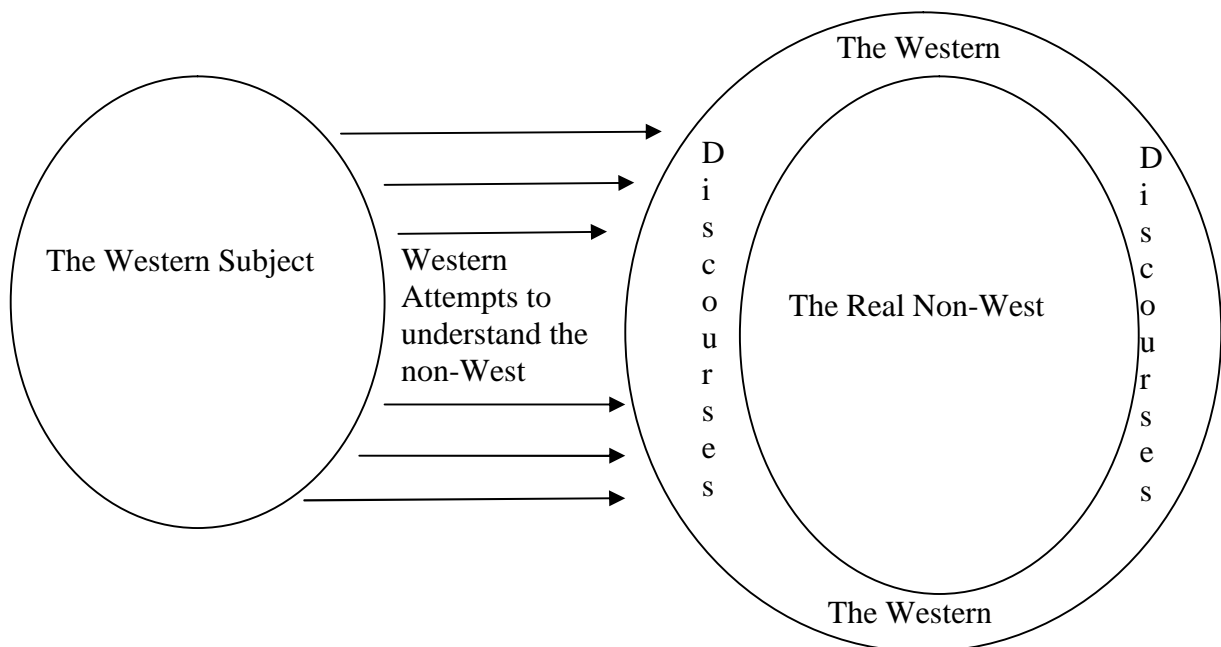


Fig. No. 2

The above figure shows how the Western misunderstanding of the non-West emerges in the mindset of the Western Subject because of two basic things: the Western discourses already posited around the non-West and the Western arrogance that claims that it can understand anything. In addition, the West declares every thing mysterious if

the object under investigation does not come under its lenses because it finds it convenient to provide new terms to changing the wrong lenses that lead to the wrong conclusion. What the knower understands is what is already written about the not-West and hence the newer arguments created about it are always based on the prejudices that the predecessors had developed toward the Orient. Thus, the mystery of the Orient is outcome of the inability of understanding; and hence a Western construct.

In fact, the West does not accept that the native people of any land are capable of thinking about their own culture on their own. Instead, they act as the one who has got the total responsibility to teach the native people to think rationally as if the totality of the non-West is ever irrational. Such misunderstanding is the result of the Western arrogance, produced out of the colonial and capitalist domination of the twentieth century. As long as the West fails to come out of the quicksand of these two discourses, it is doomed to misunderstand and mistreat the non-West, using some of the grand terminologies imaginatively developed to justify its role as the agent of civilizing the world. In the very process, the mystery functions as an image to polish the failure of their understanding. In fact, mystery is the failure of Western rationality to define the non-Western reality.

### **2.3. Rationality of the West under Question**

The West believes in rationality as the foundation of its culture. This centrality leads the mindset to conclusion that what is not the West is not rational because all the fundamentals of such judgment are the product of their thoughts. Despite being mental

constructs, the images enjoyed the unquestioned position until the 1960s. With Derrida's 1966 essay "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of Human Sciences," the Western logocentric tendency was critiqued. He states:

[...] the joyous affirmation of the play of the world and of innocence of becoming, the affirmation of a world of signs without fault, without truth, and without origin which is offered to an active interpretation. *This affirmation then determines the non-center otherwise than as loss of the center.* And it plays without security. For there is a *sure* play: that which is limited to the *substitution of given and existing*, present, pieces. In absolute chance, affirmation also surrenders itself to genetic indetermination, to the *seminal* adventure of the trace. (1125)

When only the play of signs exists, the possibility of the centrality is null. Thus, the Western politics of creating discourses came to be understood as a form of power practice.

Regarding power practice, Michel Foucault comes with his ideas of truth and power. Indeed, truth is plural in nature and functional in its essence if any. For Derrida, truth is what is logo and what the West has always sought after. In such quest, many notions were created, each new one substituting the previous ones. In Foucault, the understanding of the subject is seen as the more important dimension in the construction of truth. He believes that power is very influential invisible force in society and functions horizontally. Unlike Marx who believes in the vertical structure

of power, Foucault says that it is the horizontal and network nature of the power that constructs truth. He notes:

Each society has its régime of truth, its general politics of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true. (1144)

As Foucault agrees that statement making from the position of political power creates truth, Edward Said believes that the Western practice of statement making about the non-West is that which awards the former with power.

Scholars, creative artists, and historians engaged in such practice are Orientalists for Said. He says:

[...] an Oriental world emerged, first according to general ideas about who or what was an Oriental, then according to a detailed logic governed not simply by empirical reality but by a battery of desires, repressions, investments, and projections. (8)

The statements of power are thus the results of the repressive attitude of the West.

Since every center the West created is false, the non-Western periphery constructed to justify the central position of the West, by the same token, is also false.

To conclude, the Western constructs are produced out of political power it assumed to have possessed out of economic power. Since the truths to dominate the

other, that is, the non-West, are the mere mental construction, they lack the rational base it has long professed to have held in grip. Thus, the notion of rationality becomes another logo in the long chain of the Western tradition to create and justify certain logos. Also, the Orient as opposite of the Occident is not founded on any rational thought. Hence, the Western rationality is questioned with the critique of the Western Orientalist tendency by Edward W. Said.

#### **2.4. Orientalism in Fiction Writing**

For construction of Orient, Orientalism is practiced in fiction writing because this art allows much creativity for the writer to exercise upon the Orient as an object. Deeply rooted notions in the psyche of a people gain much momentum when exposed through fiction because fiction brings both belief and non-belief at the same time. Also, reality is surpassed by fiction in that fiction becomes real than reality because of its accessibility in market. Due to its greater potential of winning the hearts of people, the West has propagated Orientalism through fiction.

The Orient exists within the psyche of the Christian Europe that later migrated to the US in the seventeenth century. Viewed from this vantage point, this practice is the product of European and American mindset. In the process of justifying the superiority and centrality in the world of civilization, Christianity made the other shadowy, weak, fragile, feminine, non-white, and the like. Thus, in the process of binary creation, the first in the pair is defined as good and the second, bad. So, the

good is reserved to represent the West whereas the bad becomes the basic feature of the non-West.

Fiction uses high degree of imagination, thereby becoming able to bring life into it. D.H. Lawrence identifies such power in the following words:

The novel is the book of life. In this sense, the Bible is a great confused novel. [...] it is really about man alive. Adam, Eve, [...] Jesus, Mark, Judas, Paul, Peter: what is it but man alive, from start to finish? Man alive, not mere bits. Even the Lord is another man alive, in a burning bush, throwing the tablets of stone at Moses's head. (133)

Since it possesses power to bring life in artistic form, it appeals the heart of many.

With sentiments and emotions at the background, this genre of literature very easily creates and promotes certain notions.

The notions thus created, when taken as true ideas for empirical knowledge of reality, quite often fabricate the reality by blurring the demarcation line between both. In other words, reality comes in the way the novelists would like to see it. In fact, human understanding formed through such artistic writings detaches itself from the real ground and constructs prevail.

Since fiction establishes the perspective of its writer, the Western writers, without enough understanding of the non-Western stuff, form new statements by showing the latter inferior to the former in their writings, especially in fictions. Thus fiction becomes the weapon with which to wage war against the non-Western facts, whereby getting them to seem weaker. Such practice leads to nowhere than to

Orientalism. Saidian taxonomy of this practice seeks to understand the structure in the form of latent Orientalism. He states:

[...] fields of learning, as much as the works of even the most eccentric artist, are constrained and acted upon by society, by cultural traditions, by worldly circumstance, and by stabilizing influences like schools, libraries, and governments; moreover, that both learned and imaginative writing are never free, but are limited, in their imagery, assumptions, and intentions, and finally, that the advances made by a “science” like Orientalism in its academic form less objectively true than we often like to think. (201-2)

The waves of arrogance found in different discourses of the West affect the way creative writers think of themselves.

Orientalism as practiced in fiction has done much exoticization of the non-Western geography, culture, and people. *Kim*, for instance, depicts the mystic Indian geography with exotic people like Teshoo Lama, who journeys to find an unearthly river. In fact, he believes in what the West supposes to be supernatural. Thus, *Kim* presents both the Sub-Continent and the Lhasa exotic. As a matter of fact, such writings created power to dominate the non-Western people. Elleke Boehmer notes:

[...] colonized peoples were utterly silenced by being made into objects of Western system of knowledge also came in for attack. The colonized [...] lacked strategies and languages with which to resist oppression, to defy their objectification, to answer back. (351)

Another seminal English novel, *A Passage to India* by E. M. Forster further enhances the objectifying mission of the West. The Marabar caves become the most frightening locales in the Sub-Continent because of the ancient Indian echo that can be heard there. Such mentally constructed notions about the non-West become so vital in shaping the understanding of the West that they are taken as precedence by the succeeding generations so as to create, justify, and validate their arguments that help reassure the central position of the West.

To conclude, the West has taken the help of novel as a form of literature that helps exoticize the other. Such exoticization creates power for it and works as an aid to propagate its dominance over the non-West. Hence, fiction has often functioned as one of the fundamental areas of discourse formation in the West.

### Chapter 3.

#### Exoticizing the Non-West in Kerouac's *On the Road*

Jack Kerouac's novel *On the Road* (1957) carries the quest motif to exoticize the non-West in that the narrator, Salvatore Paradise, and his friend, Dean Moriarty, on an unending search in North America, seek to find the missing thing of the quest in the non-Western locales. They journey from the eastern to the western coast, i.e. New York to California, and then to the southern part of the continent, i.e. Mexico. What compels them to move back and forth, down and up? To be very precise, they have utopian notions about self, society, and humanity. To be much specific, the desire to misrepresent the non-West in his fiction drives the novelist to create restlessness in the mind of both Sal and Dean.

The novel covers the issues of America of the 1950s: sex, jazz, drugs, journey, and the like. The post-war American Society was in a different location for two major reasons: firstly, the young generation was fascinated towards communism, Zen Buddhism, and pervasive sexual behavior; and secondly, the society was trying to maintain its superiority by imposing its rules and regulations upon them. The conflict between the youth and American society of the 1950s is thus presented in Ginsberg's *The Howl*:

I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed my madness, starving  
hysterical naked,

dragging themselves through the negro streets at dawn looking for an  
angry

fix,

angle headed hipsters burning for the ancient heavenly connection to the  
starry

dynamo in the machinery of night [...] (1-3)

Ginsberg points out the problems of the college students and intellectuals of his generation. The best minds have turned into the destroyed one because of madness. A question here: Who is mad? The implicit answer is that the mad society tags them mad, thereby destroying their intellectual genius. Why should the perverse mind seek to come to the non-Western locales to find the peace? That is, the West takes that the non-West is for the irrational people to live.

In fact, the post-War American mindset was both fascinated towards and afraid of Buddhism. Buddhism in spiritual realm and communism in political domain share the same basic principle: organization, i.e. "*Shangh*" in Buddhism and "state" in communism, is above individual. The political affiliation of the beats displayed through their spiritual practice, therefore, was against the social standard of the cold-War American society. Hence, they were neglected, beaten, and marginalized because they were influenced by these non-Western ideas of religion and culture.

### **3.1. General Background**

#### **3.1.1. Kerouac and his Time**

Of the most widely read and profoundly influential writers in the American literary tradition, Jack Kerouac is remembered for his distinct narrative style, which carries the spirit of his time, i.e. the 1950s, and the depiction of his ideas and experiences that showed detachment to the contemporary mores. Born as Jean-Louis Libras de Kerouac in March, 1922 at Lowell in Massachusetts to a Franco -American Family, this French–Canadian descent learnt English as the second language after he was six but was able to develop aptitude to becoming a writer as early as he was ten. As a school boy, he attended both catholic and public schools and won Athletic scholarships to the Horace Mann Prep School in New York and then to Columbia University. In New York, he fell in with fellow literary- icons-to-be- Allen Ginsberg, the poet, and William Burroughs, the novelist. Albeit he was from immigrant background, his wit remains no less than any American writers do because more than ten novels, some poems, and seminal essays made him stand as a renewed literary figure in American literature.

Kerouac began his literary career during the period of the World War II. When Japan attacked the United States at Pearl Harbor in December 1941, America felt compelled to participate in war for national defense and integrity. With the end of the War, America emerged as the world's preeminent political, military, and economic super power. His writing emerged in the culturally repressive country in the Cold War era. America represented individualistic capitalistic democracy against the collective

communism. At the same time, there was possibility of atomic war between the Soviet Union and America as the Cold War was escalating. It was a period of widespread cultural stasis and neurosis. The era is marked by the rise of corporate, plastic, and destructive norms. People were atomized, segregated, and hierarchically situated. In this situation, he tried to prove that human beings are free, creative, and hopeful by nature. The natural and healthy human tendencies proved to be fatal for American society. One function of corporate culture and propaganda was to control the thinking of free minds. Kerouac's writings are background in such situation.

Most of Kerouac's early important writing date back in the 1950s. For example *On the Road* was published in 1957, and *The Dharma Bums* in 1958. In the 1960s, American critics began to produce essays discussing the end of modern age or a change they titled post modernist. Ronna C Johnson opines that "both his literature and the trajectory of his career as a public figure attest that as he produced his innovative texts. Kerouac confronted a post-war era neither fitted to modernism nor yet committed to the post modern" (23). However, some writers like W.T. Lamont Tr. consider the beats as the harbinger of the postmodernism. He says, "I see the beat generation writers, the New York school of Abstract expressionist and the African-American civil rights movement- all rising during the war and coming to notice in the 1950s- as the avatars of the postmodern"(180).

As a shining literary star of America whose works like *On the Road* (1957), *The Town and the City* (1950), *Satire in Paris* ( 1966), *Big Star* (1962), *Vanity of Delos* (1968), *The Dharma Bums* (1958), *Trustless* (1960), *Desolation Angels* (1965),

*Vision of Gerard* (1963), *Maggie Cassidy* (1959), and *The Subterranean* (1958) and scores of articles and essays, and an autobiography have proved themselves a milestone in American canon.

### **3.1.2. Kerouac as Storyteller**

Jack Kerouac, the key player of the Beat Generation in prose, protested against the dominant mores of the mid-twentieth century and advocated for personal freedom from cultural, social, and legal boundary. Like his life, his works reflect the same protest against the American materialism, conformity, and immorality. He retreated from the prevailing writing style and adopted a new writing style "spontaneous prose", Kerouac rejects to assimilate himself in the mainstream and condemns law and order situation of the society, which display the dehumanizing tendency of material interest and opposite parental values.

A sort of affinity can be drawn between Kerouac's 'spontaneous prose' and James Joyce's 'stream of consciousness' though they are not exactly the same. Joyce's 'stream of consciousness' of is the expression of conscious whereas Kerouac's spontaneous prose is listening to one's instinct and pouring out the thoughts undisturbed and uninterrupted. Regarding his style, Kerouac says:

Not "selectivity of expression but following freer deviation,  
(association) of mind into limited blows-on-subject seas of thought,  
swimming in sea of English with no discipline other than rhythms of  
rhetorical exhalation and expostulated statement, like a fist coming

down an a table with each complete utterance, bang! (the space dash)-  
Blow as deep as you want-write as deeply, fish as far down as you want,  
satisfy yourself first, then reader cannot fail to receive telepathic shock  
and meaning- excitement by same laws operating in his own human  
mind. (qtd. in Charter 484)

His narrative, unlike the contemporary style, is quirky, digressive and sometimes difficult to understand and impenetrable, too. His way of living and principle seem to have intermingled in his narrative; so a touch of semi-autobiographical elements can be witnessed in his works. Most of his writings are essentially experimental in that he portrays himself honestly in his books.

His writings seem to have undergone gradual change to finally reach his trademark style 'spontaneous prose' technique. His first orthodox novel *The Town and the City* followed the conventional style of story telling influenced by his literary hero of his youth, Thomas Wolfe. However, he found no interest and satisfaction in the conventional style and, as a result; he came to discover completely new method of storytelling that he implies in his later writings.

As thought is a continuous chain of ideas, his later writings too are rarely disturbed and interrupted by paragraphs and punctuation marks-- they flew like the river, continuous and undisturbed. The following extract from his '*On the Road*' reflects his theory.

The most fantastic parking lot a attendant in the world, he can back a car  
forty miles and hour into a tight squeeze and stop at the wall, jump out,

race among fenders, leap into another car, circle it fifty miles an hour in a narrow space, back swiftly into tight spot, hump, shop the car with the emergency so that you see it bounce as he flies out; then clear to the ticket shack, sprinting like a track star, hand a ticket, leap into a newly arrived ear before the owner's half out, leap literally under him as he steps out, start the car with the door flapping and roar off to the next available spot are pop in brake out ran working like that without pause eight hours a night, evening such hours and after-theatre such hours in greasy wino pants with a frayed fur lined jacket and beat shoes that flap. Now he'd bought a new suit to go back in blue with pencil stripes, vest and all-eleven dollar on Third Avenue, with a watch and watch chain and a portable type writer with which he was going to start writing in a Denver seaming house us soon as he got a job there. (76)

Seeing his style of narration in his later writing one can easily find out that they are the wonderful amalgamation of fact and fantasy as he uses his autobiographical element with the fantastic way of depiction through spontaneous prose' and 'jazz' writing, *On the Road* too is a semi-autobiographical novel. The characters are barely fictionalized versions of Kerouac's friends. The novel includes four parts and short epilogue, the account of four trips across American and each of continental crisscrossing undertaken between 1947 and 1950. Carlo Marx is a guise for Allen Ginsberg; Old Bull lee, William Burroughs, Remi Boncocur, Menri Cru; and Dean Moriarty, Neal Cassady. Sal Paradise is Kerouac himself. Like wise in *The*

*subterraneous* Burroughs is disguised as Frank Carmody, Allen Ginsberg as Adam Moored and Lawrence Ferlinghetti as Larry O' Hara.

*Vision of Gerard* records the earliest childhood memories of Kerouac.

Likewise, *On the Road* records the period of his life beginning when he met his friend Neal Cassady in New York City in the winter of 1947. Cassady got him on the road and he described this in part one of the novels as twenty five year old hitchhiking west from New York.

### **3.1.3. America of the 1950s**

The United States emerged from the World War II as the World's preeminent political, military and economic power. The World was presumed to have been gradually 'Americanized'. Henry Luce in *Times* had predicted in 1941 the twentieth century as 'the American Century' (Colkin 3). The vision was immediately realized when America became the dominant intellectual and cultural power. However, heightened desires, especially in a world of change, often drew out opposite feelings of anxiety and confusion. The unity among the allied countries had sustained during the World War II and that had been led by America. On the surface level, it continues during the 1950s. Conformity was common, as few young men and old alike followed group norms rather than striking out on their own. When the War was over, traditional roles were re-affirmed: men were expected to be breadwinners; women, even if they worked, engaged themselves in household works.

The 1910s were marked by war: the 1920s, by hedonism and its foes; the 1930s by the Great Depression; and the 1940, again by war. On the surface, the 1950s were quiet and even dull prior to the previous decades. The surface image of prosperity and conformity, in crowded cities and happy suburbs, remained in the public consciousness. They had minimum problems in the decade because the decade was safe in terms of wealth, trade, military, and atomic power. Things were going very well materially for mainstream and rest of the world was staring enviously. The U.S. state department intellectual George F. Kenon in the Truman doctrine in 1947 developed the doctrine of containment and it was designed against communism containment as a policy of preventing a state from extending its sphere of influence. Its function as a military and economic policy was to counter the threat of communist expansion.

In the post- War years, the USA witnessed a 'red scar', which largely crushed a left culture, i.e. communism. It contained political protest and promoted conformity by suppressing t and forcing communist to assimilate into the mainstream politics. American senator McCartney declared communists as non-Americans. He advised Americans that American communists did not bear nationalism; rather they were always ready to destruct the Unity of Nation. He applied the concept of "witch hunt" against communists. Some intellectuals, writers and Hollywood figures were also victimized in the witch-hunt. It is the most inhuman and discriminative system of Americans who created such tendency as a culture: such culture really dislocated the life of many Americans who were not real communists. Therefore, many former

communists adopted a new profession that of anti-communist by ways to ferret out dangerous influence in American life.

The intellectuals were declared as mad when they opposed the thought of power system. Therefore, the intellectuals, forced to lead an uncomfortable life, were force to continue the life of derangement, frustration and depression. . In fact, the identity of the people was created not by them but by the power system of American culture injected with money, reason, machinery, war, police force, army, and administration.

Conformity was deeply embedded in the post-War years promoted in part by the demands of the policy of containment and the 'red scare'. In troubled times, conformity helped to ease anxiety by limiting the range of options and by supporting consensus around options, deemed reasonable and valuable. The corporate liberal economy that boomed in the 1950s was fed by the Cold War. American economic power abroad and rising productivity and increasing wages at home also aided conformity and complacency. In industrial relations, the earlier model of industrial strife was replaced by the reassertion of managerial authority but it was balanced by worker's satisfaction with increased wages and shorter hour in many key industries. Even the American University System enrolled as a full-fledged member of the corporate liberal establishment.

American President Harry Truman's (President during 1945-53) was firm that first priority in the immediate post-War period was to make the transition economy of the World War to a sustainable economy. Service men, after the World War II,

wanted to come home quickly; but once they arrived, they faced completion for housing and employment. The G.I. Bill passed before the end of the War helped ease servicemen back into civilian life by providing such benefits as granted loans for home buying and financial aid for providing industrial training and university education. Less than a week after the War ended, Truman presented the Congress with, 21-point program, which provided protection against unfair employment practices, a higher minimum wage, greater unemployment composition, and housing assistance. He added other proposal for health insurance and atomic energy legislation. Thus, the United States marched ahead towards conformity with capitalistic measures.

In the industry and business, a new ideal of success came into being. In some cases, the corporation became more than the employer did: it tried to be an ideal for those who were outside the mainstream culture. Boundaries between work and family, and society and the individual diminished. The corporations already understood the needs of the people. When an executive was transferred to a new community, he/she and his/her family had little need to worry about social disruption. The corporation made him/her easy providing with suburban house and community would be proper for the executive.

America had a double role. On the one hand, she tried to fulfill the necessities of the people by implementing G.I. Bill, corporate laws, containment, and 'red scare'. By these provisions, Americans began to be considered to taste the gifts of conformity. On the other hand, America developed repressive roles to the people who

were not satisfied with the provisions. Power always remained in the elite group of country. It made a system and exerted on the masses. The working class and middle class intellectuals found it difficult to communicate the cultural values and the interest of common people. It is because the American capitalistic culture was founded on the high culture of middle and upper classes.

### **3.2. Textual Analysis of *On the Road***

#### **3.2.1. Kerouac's Misunderstanding of the West**

To possess *more* every moment is an obvious phenomenon of American Society because the people in the U.S. have ever wanted to bring as many things under their control as possible. For instance, home ownership is an old dream (Cullen 9) for American people. In fact, the idea of home demands much because unities, warmth, material possessions are essential in order to live life comfortably. At the heart of home is also the idea of heterosexuality for procreation. But, Sal begins the quest with Dean only after he "split(s) up" (3). He loses his home with "weary split up" because he begins to feel everything "dead" (3). Paradoxically, when everything turns dead, his life begins because Dean Moriarty has come. Dean is so much attracted towards matter that all the time he wants to gain: he asks Chad to "teach him all about Nietzsche" (4), searches "girls for sex" (6), and wants "bread and love" (10). For him, philosophy, girls, bread, and love are all matters. The matter acts as such an important force that there is nothing, which is not liked. It is apt state:

They'd done this about five times now; they were having a hell of a time. They liked everything. They never stopped smiling. I tried to talk to them a kind of dumb attempt on my part to befriend the captains of our ship - and the only responses I got were two sunny smiles and large white corn-fed teeth. (26)

Likewise, time becomes a matter to own. The beat youths "who threw their watches off the roof to cast their ballot for Eternity" (Ginsberg 54) want to bring time under their control. Eternity is the state of timelessness and changelessness. Sal as a beat youth is frightened by the normal person, a businessman, as Sal gets lift in his car. The speed is double of the age of the socialites. For them, "Time was money. Motion was progress" (Didion 107).

Dean whose mother dies when he was a small child (*Road* 39) always feels lack in his life. Along with this, both care and sex become weakness in his life. He lacks motherly love in his life. Likewise, father always remains a distant, idealistic image. It leads him to act against the social norms. Therefore, Sal narrates:

From the age of eleven to seventeen he was usually in reform school. His specialty was stealing cars, gunning for girls coming out of high school in the afternoon, driving them out to the mountains, making them, and coming back to sleep in any available hotel bath tub in town. (39)

These beat youths are poor right from the beginning so Dean sleeps in the bathtub. Indeed, beat generation is "really [all of us] bottomly broke" (*Road* 45) because they

have many desires to fulfill. Drug is one of such matters that always devoured their money. Therefore, Ginsberg describes the beats as the destroyed minds "who got busted in their public beards returning through Laredo with a belt of marijuana for New York" (*Road* 9). They spent their money on drugs as suggested by "woesome arm with the thousand holes" (*Road* 48) because they identified themselves with the characters of "sad drama in the American night (*Road* 48). Like drug, sex also remained a powerful factor in their mind. They took it as a means to reach the ultimate bliss of life. So too, Sal narrates Dean "making love to two girls at the same time" (42) and Camille having affair with both Dean and Roy Johnson:

Dean did nothing but look out the window. Then when everybody left, Dean merely looked at Camille, pointed at his wrist, made the sign" four [...], and went out. At three the door was locked to Roy Johnson. At four it was opened to Dean. I wanted to go right out and see the madman. Also he had promised to fix me up; he knew all the girls in Denver. (43)

To sum up, matter as a motif functions as an attraction in the Western mindset. As Sal goes further in accompany of Dean, he comes across different kinds of incidents and gains experiences. But such people are the icons of the Western society and whatever they think become the voice of the West. In this regard, Jack Kerouac brings forth the misunderstanding of the culture and the impressions and desires of these social outcast are the dignified notions in the novel. When the creative genius of the twentieth century begins to celebrate the torn psyche, he destroys the

understanding of the other in that the irrational understanding of a section becomes the whole understanding of the culture. Thus Kerouac misunderstands the West and misrepresents the non-West at the same time.

### **3.2.2. Arab Image as the Western Bias**

Arab is nothing but all desert for the West. Since the land consists of only desert and nothing else, the customs Arabic people follow are strange ones. Jack Kerouac also presents the same picture of the Arab world. In this *misty* land, the people are strange. Put in other words, the Western bias towards the non-Western peoples results in such presentation. Detaching the Arab people the real ground, they are presented in dream-like situation.

*On the Road* propagates this picture of the Arab people and the land. Sal Paradise, whose personality is best represented in the symbol of cracked mirror, believes that his world consists of false people. Kerouac writes:

A tremendous thing happened when Dean met Carlo Marx. Two keen minds that they are, they took to each other at the drop of a hat. Two piercing eyes glance into two piercing eyes –the holy con-man with the shining mind, and the sorrowful poetic con-man with the dark mind that is Carlo Marx. (7)

These false people around him give the false impressions of reality. Yet, Sal fails to understand the society. Falling the victim of such failure, he traps himself in perverse

behavior, with extremist attitude. He says that when he got home he ate “everything in the icebox” (107).

Such person is the spokesperson who gives the impressions about the unseen world. What he has heard and known through others in myths and other groundless discourses of life becomes the central and guiding principle of his mind. So too, he comes to share his dream with other friends. He dreams without sleeping. When he encounters the worst aspect of his life in his own society, he comes to realize that he is in some Arabic desert where some haunting people are following him. He says:

Carlo Marx and I once sat together, knee to knee, in two chairs, facing, and I told him a dream I had about a strange Arabian figure that was pursuing me across the desert; that I tried to avoid, that finally overtook me just before I reached the Protective City. (124)

Sal and Carlo are both emotionally loose characters of the novel. However, the way they talk shows us the Western superiority that can form any statement about the non-West. In this context, Sal tells about a dream in which the meaningless post-World War II society becomes a confused desert of Arab. Arab is employed as an adjective to talk about everything strange for Americans. For instance, Sal perceives “Arabian paradise” (290) in sex in a qwhore house. In the like manner, Sal’s friend tells him that “he’d seen an Arab in Tunis who could stick a man’s eye from forty feet” (150). A question here: Why Arab? This question is pertinent to ask here in that the Western bias against the Arab world is creating such comparison.

The Arab world becomes a space of confusion with its meaningless deserts. Also, the strange person that follows him is a symbol of death. Why does the West associate death and confusion to the Arab world? With its power that, according to Foucault who says that “power is first of all a force that serves it self” (qtd. In Bertens 203), the West attempts to justify its superiority over the Arab world. Nevertheless, it forgets cultural differences between the two from where the confusion arises. Moreover, Sal is in confusion right from the beginning. He says:

I was so lonely, so sad, so tired, so quivering, so broken, so beat, that I got up my courage, the courage necessary to approach a strange girl, and acted. Even then I spent five minutes beating my thighs in the dark, as the bus rolled down the road. (81)

Sal Paradise as a confused personality reached out the Protective City that symbolizes the refuge to the Christianity, before the doom caused by the Arab image, that is, the death. Edward W. Said also finds such presentation resulting from the Western bias against the Arab world. In the similar case he assesses the Western bias thus:

The discriminations and refinements of Dante’s poetic grasp of Islam are an instance of the schematic, almost cosmological inevitability with which Islam and its designated representatives are creatures of Western geographical, historical, and above all, moral apprehension. [...] what matters and is decisive is [...] the Orientalist vision, a vision by no

means confined to the professional scholar, but rather the common possession of all who have thought about the Orient in the West. (69)

The discriminating tendency of the West seen in Kerouac depicts the Arab image as the frightening and haunting. This misrepresentation is rooted in the biased attitude of the West. Also, Arab has become a word that carries the sense of falsehood in such biased attitude. Kerouac uses it to mean disillusionment when he writes: “It was like a long, spectral Arabian dream in the afternoon in another in another life –Ali Baba and the alleys and the courtesans” (289).

To sum up, *On the Road* presents an unbalanced picture of the non-West in relation to the West. In fact, such presentation tries to show the superiority of the latter vis-à-vis the former. Besides, the mystic quality of the Arab and its people is nothing more than the failure to understand the *other* on its own right, resulting from the Western biased attitude and confusion that is not taken as the weakness of the Western rationality but glorified as the highest quality to celebrate in the works of fictions. To state in brief, the West is more biased to the Arab world and their religion more than the rest of the world. But such biasedness comes in the form of cultural inferiorization because culture as lifestyle of people is the easy prey of the West. Inferiorizing the culture means showing the people standing lower than where the West stands. In the like manner, the misty understanding of the Western mind ever tries to demonize the Arab people in that it wants to justify that their religion, Islam, is demonic.

### 3.2.3. Banaras and Lhasa as the Imaginary Lands

The so-called rationality of the West emerges as the utter mistake in the beat generation. All the major characters suffer because they fail to communicate. The arrogance of being rational in the West has done much damage to its mindset. This confused generation, too attracted to study the irrational philosophy, deals the abstract thought in quite detail. Sal narrates:

They began with an abstract thought, discussed it; reminded each other of another abstract point forgotten in the rush of events; Dean apologized but promised he could get back to it and manage it fine, bringing up illustrations. (48)

The irrational people talk but cannot communicate anything. Besides, the failure to make any point troubles them much. Hence, Kerouac makes Sal realize:

Everything was collapsing, and to make things inconceivably more frantic there was an ecstatic spastic fellow in the bar who threw his arms around Dean and moaned in his face, and Dean went mad again with sweats and insanity, to add still more to the unbearable confusion Dean rushed out the next moment and stole a car [...]. (220)

Failure in communication is the post-World War II phenomenon and thus the Western problem. Nevertheless, the beat generation wants to link this issue with the holy dimension of the east. Peter B. High notes:

Like Ginsberg, the writing style of Jack Kerouac [...] is influenced by the Zen idea of spontaneity. He wrote his novel *On the Road* (1957) “at

a white heat” in a few weeks. But most of the critics complain that he should have planned it more carefully. It is a story of a group of Beats who travel westward across America. Symbolically, it is a trip from the “unfree” city to emotional, spiritual and physical freedom of the West.

(192)

The deep-rooted belief in their life style leads them to suppose that the Lhasa and Benaras are two emotional cities. Hence, they long to reach these locales.

The exoticization reaches so high that these non-Western spaces become the unearthly points from where to view the complete nature of humanity. Thus, in México, Neuvo Laredo looks like “Holy Lhasa”(274) to them. Indeed, Sal believes that the road has to lead him to the magic land. He says:

Behind us lay the whole of America and everything Dean and I had previously known about life, and life on the road. We had finally found the magic land at the end of the road we never dreamed the extent of the magic. (276)

Actually, they find nothing other than the imagined geography that remains latent in their mind. So too, they compare various unfamiliar and strange places with Benaras and Lhasa which they have heard are the holy cities. With such mentally constructed notions of Oriental geography, they assume that they have understood the reality of the World. To put in simple words, it is another manifestation of the Western arrogance.

The speculative geography of the east is presented in *On the Road* thus:

[...] like driving across the World and into the places where we would finally learn ourselves among the Fellahin Indians of the World, the essential strain of the basic primitive, wailing humanity that stretches in a belt around the equatorial belly of the world from Malaya (the long finger nail of China) to India the great subcontinent to Arabia to Morocco to the selfsame deserts and jungles of Mexico [...] that you hear 12,000 miles around in the depths of Benares the capital of the world. (280)

The geography Kerouac forms in mind does not have any connection with the real one in that he has neither any authority nor any empirical base to make such statements. However, he uses his Orientalist *prerogatives* to compare one locale to the others. The beats on the whole are the victims of American loneliness; yet they do not stop forming picture that shows the eastern centers of civilizations and religions as emotionally dark places. On the grounds, Kerouac calls them holy. In reality, these places as depicted in the novel, do not exist but they are imaginary lands created by and for the West as an attempt to understand the non-West.

#### **3.2.4. Aztec Lake: Fascination of the Exotic Non-Western Past**

The West has not only misrepresented the non-Western present but also made the best of its attempts to manipulate and redefine the non-Western past. The non-Western archetypes in various ways have popped up in the Western writings time and again. When Kerouac wants to glorify the Christianity, he wholeheartedly uses

positive statements. Sal narrates: “They were the eyes of the Virgin Mother when she was a child. We saw in them the tender and forgiving gaze of Jesus” (298). On the other hand, the non-Western symbols and images come in the way that detaches itself from the foundation. For example, Sal perceives Oriental quality (192) in the rug on which Galatea and Ed Dunkel make love. Thus, every symbol outside the Christian world becomes that which needs to be misrepresented.

Aztec lake that appears as an image in *On the Road* has great story to tell the world. The lake is associated with the grandeur of the non-Western past and reminds the reader of what the West had done to the non-West. Kerouac relates it with bars and cheap culture. He writes:

You had to jump over a ditch to get your drink, and in the bottom of the ditch was the ancient lake of the Aztec. You came out of the bar with your back to the wall and edged back to the street. They served coffee mixed with rum and nutmeg. (301)

This lake found in the ditch of American mind is the remnant of what the West had destroyed as the uncivilized world. In other words, it carries the guilt and fascination found at the core of the Western thought.

The Western manners are such that they show even the native of the land like Aztec lake in negative ways. Indeed, the West has developed negative attraction toward the non-Western past. Gerald Vizenor calls it the postindian phenomenon. He states:

The postindian as warriors hover the ruins of tribal representations and surmount the scriptures of manifest manners with new stories; these warriors counter the surveillance and literature of dominance with their own simulations of survivance. The postindian arises from the earlier inventions of the tribes only to contravene the absence of the real with theatrical performances; the theater of tribal consciousness is the recreation of the real, not the absence of the real in the simulation of dominance. (1978)

As a matter of fact, the native culture is also facing the same difficulty as the non-Western cultures face. This misrepresentation has functioned as the chief source of power in the West.

The Aztec lake, seemingly insignificant in the text, works as a window to view the Western psyche where both repulsion and attraction toward the non-Western past are present. Repulsion works when such past is badly treated in order to compare to the negative aspects of society; yet, the West has failed to free itself from such archetypes. In addition, the story of failure of the non-West is repeated again and again in the Western writings in order that they are able to prove their power and capability to justify themselves superior. Said in other words, the Aztec lake and the fall of Aztec civilization remind the West the story of their victory and the civilizing mission they assumed that they had got responsibility to fulfill. Thus, the Aztec lake works as an image, which does double functions: firstly, attracting the West to the non-Western

past; and secondly, helping the West exoticize the non-West with its past and the story of its defeat at its background.

### 3.2.5. The Cowboy as the Tantalizing Figure

The cowboy as image serves the beat to imagine them as the native people of the land. In other words, the image encompasses the tribal Indian people. The cowboy image functions as a matter of attraction for the beats because they make the image very tantalizing. As a part of mental construction of the West, this image becomes very powerful in itself. Regarding the power of mind to form images and constructions, Sal says:

During the night at least a hundred seamen and assorted civilians came in and cast their sentient debauchment on me till I was unrecognizably caked. What difference does it make after all? –anonymity in the world of men is better than fame in heaven, for what’s heaven? What’s earth? All in the mind. (245)

This presents the Western arrogance to dominate the others. The native culture and people of America are one of the components of the *Other*.

The cowboy is exoticized in *On the Road* by showing the image of a beat character in him. In reality, Kerouac wants to claim that the native of the land are like them. He reports Sal’s first encounter with the cowboy thus:

Then Omaha, and , by God, the first cowboy I saw, walking along the bleak walls of the wholesale meat warehouses in a ten-gallon hat and

Texas boots, looked like any beat character of the brick wall down of the East except for the getup. (19)

Sal talks about the cowboy because the narrator, a victim of social conformism, finds himself in the native person. Thus, new image about the native person is created in that they become the icon whom to follow for their lifestyle the beat as a revolting group realizes that the Western society lacks spirituality.

Attracted by the Zen Buddhism, they seek to explore the hidden reality of life. In the meantime, they never live holy life. Instead, they pursue more and more sex. This socially perverted group demands so much of sexuality that their mind is always preoccupied with it. Sal says:

Then when everybody left, Dean merely looked at Camille, pointed at his wrist, made the sign “four” (meaning he’d be back at four), and went out. At three the door was locked to Roy Johnson. At four it was opened to Dean. I wanted to go right out and see the madman. Also he had promised to fix me up; he knew all the girls in Denver. (43)

The non-Western peoples are taken and treated as more spiritual ones, which is why they are fascinated towards their spiritual practice. However, they make fun of the non-Western ways to spirituality by not abandoning their silly quest for pleasure in possession.

Similarly, supernaturalism and fatalism are linked with the native people in the Western consciousness. Sal Paradise, for instance, mentions that the cowboy “went to fetch his wife and off to whatever fate awaited him” (21). That is to say, such people

believe in fate and the supernatural power, as opposed to the Western people. Even the beat generation, group of social outcasts, thinks that they are far more superior than the native. To answer this phenomenon of misrepresentation, Vizenor writes:

The sources of natural reason and tribal consciousness are doubt and wonder, not nostalgia or liberal melancholy for the lost wilderness, comic not tragic, because melancholy is cultural boredom, and the tragic is casual, the closure of natural reason. [...] Tribal consciousness is wonder, chance, coincidence, not the revisions of a pedate, even so, for curious reasons some would hear confessions and the conversions of criminals as the evidence of a new tribal awareness. (1984)

The critic rightly states that the tribal consciousness is a wonder for the Christian world. So too, they are attracted to it; yet, their failure to understand and accept the novelty and depth of the grandeur of tribal consciousness results in creating tantalizing figures like those of the cowboy in *On the Road*.

To sum up, the West fails to acknowledge the hidden treasure within the native consciousness because it refuses to accept any existence of native consciousness. Hence, the native figures become funny and tantalizing in that the way they appear to the Western eye is not common and the Western mind likes to be extraordinary. This ambivalent psyche produces exotic people in the world that is outside the European mind supported by the Christianity.

## Chapter 4.

### Exotic Non-West: Mental Construction of the West

The Western mind has produced various kinds of discourses in order to justify its centrality as summed up in WASP/M, that is, White Anglo-Saxon Protestant Male. In the similar vein, the rationality of the West, as it is generally understood in their location, remains incomplete unless the non-West is taken as irrational. Thus, in center/periphery binary, the West assumes its bogus position of the former, thereby marginalizing the non-West. In order to justify the marginal position of the non-West, various discourses of the West always strive towards illustrating it as an exotic space.

White man's desire for marginalizing the non-West is aided with the means of exoticizing the non-Western geography. For one thing, the spatial dimension as propagated in the Western texts about the non-West does not bear any foundation in the reality. Thus, a creak can always be seen between the real and the constructed. This chasm itself is the symbolic manifestation of what lies in the Western mindset. To state it in simple words, the Western mind is itself fragmented. Therefore, communication is a problem. Sal Paradise in *On the Road* says:

That night we all drank beer and pulled wrists and talked till dawn, and in the morning while we sat around dumbly smoking butts from ashtrays, in the grey light of a gloomy day, Dean got up nervously, paced around, thinking, and decided the thing to do was to have Marylou make breakfast and sweep the floor. (5)

Even after talking for a whole night, the beats fail to make a certain point, for deeper fragmentations in mind are present.

Similarly, the Arabian, Indian, and Chinese people and their land are always a matter to marvel at. On the one hand, such amazement comes out of the ignorance of the subject; on the other, they like to depict these peoples and their land that way in order to justify the abnormal state of the non-West. Exoticization as the Western mission has become a weapon for them in that it helps command the global power for them. During colonial time, it functioned to make their civilizing mission valid. In present, exotic presentation of the non-West serves the interest of capitalism and globalization. That the non-West must copy the West to be modern and civilized has become the underlying logic of globalization now.

The non-West as an inferior discourse is a Western archetype that has repeatedly appeared in works of creative and scholarly writings. Without paying any attention to this aspect, Ann Charters writes:

*On the Road* can be taken as a quest taken by Sal Paradise, who sets out to test American dream by trying to pin down its promise of unlimited freedom by following the example of Dean Moriarty. Dean is the dream's reality. On the margins of society, he has no illusions about the end of the road. (xxi)

The so-called unlimited freedom of the dream results in exoticization of the non-West.

To conclude, the non-West or the Orient as the Western texts display does not exist except in the mind. Thus, exoticization of this locale is false. As a matter of fact, it

is all mental construction of the West. In addition, the construction of such images has helped the West justify its rationale of domination in colonial and postcolonial capitalist era. Thus, such exoticization of the non-West is the political activity of the Western psyche to inculcate and enhance the political interest and dominate the non-West economically and politically at the same time.

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