

CHAPTER ONE

Jack Kerouac and the Context

Jack Kerouac, often quoted as the 'King of the Beats,' is one of the representative authors of Beat Generation who predominantly appeals to the male readers. His novel *On the Road* is completely doused in the masculinity, and female readers may find this piece of literature hopelessly masculine work. There is the presence of qualities of traditional masculinity like avoidance of femininity, sex without intimacy and emotional attachment, self-reliance, aggression, alcoholism in his novel *On the Road*, which are generally taken as the representative depictions of Beat Generation.

Jack Kerouac was born in 12 March 1922, in Lowell, Massachusetts, in a French-Canadian family. Kerouac's real name was Jean-Louis Lebris. He was the son of Leo Kerouac, a printer, and Gabrielle Levesque, a factory worker. Kerouac loved to read and wanted to be a writer from his earliest childhood. He did not speak English until he was five years old, using instead a combination of French and English used by many French-Canadians who settled in New England. Kerouac's older brother Gerard died at the age of nine. He also had an older sister.

During 1940s and 1950s, a new kind of bohemian subculture appeared in America with leading figures like Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, William S. Burroughs and Neal Cassady, centered on the artist colonies of North Beach (San Francisco), Venice West (Los Angeles) and Greenwich Village (New York City). Those figures became popular as 'Beat Generation', a term coined by Kerouac himself in 1948. Beat emerged after the World War II in opposition to the middle class life style, consuming patterns, militaristic patriotism and showed their discontent against growing materialism of their country. They introduced innovative

style in writing literature, made experiment with different drugs, searched liberation in sexuality, showed their interest in religion especially in Zen Buddhism, celebrated Jazz, maintained sexism and gave continuity to the traditional masculinity.

Celebrating rhythms of jazz, frenetic sex, illicit drugs, and the mystery and promise of the open road, Kerouac's *On the Road* defines what is meant to be "Beat" and captures the spirit of liberated underground America after World War II. This novel is the story of Beats like Sal Paradise and Dean Moriarty and the whole generation that was rising from the underground America which became popular as Beat Generation.

Based on Jack Kerouac's adventures with Neal Cassady, *On the Road* is the story of two friends crossing the country in search of a new kind of experience and authenticity that they could not find in mainstream culture of Post-World War II America. The novel revolves around the two main characters, the narrator, Salvatore Paradise (Sal), and his friend Dean Moriarty. The novel contains five parts, three of them describing Sal's road trips with Moriarty of the years 1947 to 1950. The novel is autobiographical, and most of the characters are based on the real people who used pseudonyms. For example, Sal Paradise is Jack himself, Neal Cassady is Dean Moriarty, Carlo Max is Ginsberg, Carolayn Cassady is Camille, Bea France is Terry and many more having relation with Jack Kerouac.

Kerouac presents Sal Paradise, a young and innocent writer, and Dean Moriarty, a crazy youth racing around America, and testing the limits of the American Dream. Their journeys include the beautiful scenery of rural villages, corn fields, hills, endless deserts along with various road trips. Through road trips, they are making themselves free from established ideology, searching their personal freedom, and finding pleasure in sex, drugs, and jazz.

On the Road is a tale of friendship between two males. Through their adventures and travels, Dean became comrade and brother to Sal. Sal finds Dean having a kind of madness. Dean's unique energy inspires him to wander around America in the search of "kicks." However, to Sal, each trip itself is more important than any actual destination. He follows Dean and finds that the quest to live in the moment is a spiritual one. He searches for meaning in all of his experiences and in all the people he meets.

Sal's friendship with Dean is at the center of the novel. Even when Sal is not with Dean, Dean is never far from Sal's thoughts throughout the book. Although Dean has many weaknesses and faults, Sal loves and admires him. Dean leaves Sal in San Francisco without money, Sal forgives him. Later, Dean again leaves him in Mexico City in very bad situation. But still Sal considers moving to San Francisco with his girlfriend Laura to live near Dean and Camille.

The journey of Sal and Dean is interpreted as a journey to get maturity. At the end of journey, Sal gains maturity. In every road trips, Sal seeks for love and some kind of stability in life but Dean, just seeks kicks, women and sex. He becomes husband of three women; Camilla, Marylou, Inez and become father of four children but he never notices his responsibility towards his wives and children. He leaves Camille and Inez helplessly with their newly born child. Dean is a module for irresponsible person.

At the end of the novel, we find Sal preparing to settle his life with a lady named Laura in New York as a man of same middle class society. It seems that Sal accepts middle class social values at the end of the novel as we see him dressed formally. It can be interpreted as he is giving up his counterculture lifestyle. Dean is also invited by Camille to stay with her and their babies. But it would be very hard for

Dean to stay with them because we see no changes in him throughout the journey. He can abandon anyone in any situation as he abandons Marylou and Sal in San Francisco and Sal in Mexico City.

Beats and Gender

Being the representative work of Beat Generation, Kerouac's *On the Road* presents the view of Beats towards women. Women in the novel are continuously suppressed, oppressed, marginalized and objectified. All women remain homemakers throughout the novel. Males like Sal and Dean are presented as subjects and females like Marylou, Camille, Terry, Lee Ann, Babe, Galatea and many other are presented as objects. Male view them as a replaceable material.

None of the women in the novel are introduced through their inner quality except their physical appearance. It is visible from the first chapter of the novel as Sal describes Marylou's appearance and mentions how beautiful she is. Sal describes Marylou from her outer appearance without knowing her inner quality.

Kerouac's *On the Road* is filled with Beat spirit. Beat culture was blend of various phenomena which challenged the main stream society. But this rebellion of Beat movement can be said only partial because they keep narrow minded conception of mainstream culture in the case of women. Throughout the novel, female characters are excluded from the intellectual and decision-making sphere of the males. Beats, in the novel, are open minded about class, race and able to remove the rigidity about the subject of sexuality, but they forget the liberation of women. For them, women exist mainly as girlfriends, lovers and relatives. They accept their peripheral roles and place them as unimportant housewives. Outer world belongs to males and they have authoritative roles over females in society.

It can be argued that Sal's middle class America is patriarchal and women are

in an inferior position. There is division of labour according to sex which clearly implies the home as a place for female duty. Jack Kerouac, like many other Beats, rejects the rigid sexual patterns of mainstream culture, but clearly maintains sexism. He does not give equal role to female as male, and gives same role to women which is asserted by contemporary white middle class American society as Jack Kerouac writes, "Dean got up nervously, paced around, thinking and decided the things to do was Marylou make breakfast and sweep the floor" (4). Though, women wanted to live like male beats, the work of kitchen and household are the responsibility of women.

Review of Literature

It is frequently said that Kerouac wrote this novel in April 1951 within three weeks, typing continuously onto a 120-foot roll of teletype paper. Though this story is true but this book is the result of a long creative process of revising and rewriting. Kerouac carried a small notebook, in which much of the text was written as the eventful span of road trips of New York, Denver, San Francisco, Mexico City and many other places with his friend Neal Cassady in late forties. Kerouac completed this novel in 1951 and gave to Malcolm Cowley but Cowley refused to publish novel because of its use of original name of people for his characters. So many portion of the novel was cleared off without permission and information of Kerouac. Its 1957's form is shorter and had used pseudonyms for characters of real life.

Kerouac's *On the Road* is best known for his new writing style of spontaneous prose. Being inspired by letters from his friend Neal, and the spontaneity of jazz music, he discovered his new way of writing while writing his second novel *On the Road* and began to develop his practice of spontaneous prose. Spontaneous prose similar to stream of consciousness technique was not a new technique, but the Beat

writers became first to relate this technique with jazz music. Traditional grammatical patterns and punctuations were irrelevant and at the same time, passion and spontaneity were the most important elements. Several passages in *On the Road* are written in this technique but last paragraph of the novel is perfect example of this technique.

While discussing the writing technique of Jack Kerouac, Erik Mortenson, in the book *Capturing the Beat Moment: Cultural Politics and the Poetic of Presence*, remarks on the prose style of Kerouac as: “Kerouac’s spontaneous prose, heralded a new type of writing that was emerging in America a style that was direct, open and tied to the body” (1). Kerouac continued to use this method in his later prose works and made world to see that his writing style could produce rhythm.

This novel published from Viking Press in 1957 was based on revision of 1951 which was shorter than original scroll manuscript and used pseudonyms for all characters. The original scroll of this novel was finally published in 2007. When *On the Road* was originally published in 1957 from Viking Press, Gilbert Millstein in *The New York Times* book review wrote:

On the Road is the second novel by Jack Kerouac and its publication is the historic occasion in so far as the exposure of an authentic work of any moment in any age in which the attention is fragmented and the sensibilities are blunted by the superlatives of fashion, 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 is he. (27)

Millstein defines publication of *On the Road* as a historic occasion which gave birth to the representative work of generation in which its writer is living. He finds Jack

Kerouac as a principal figure of his generation. Millstein's review gave instant success and recognition to the novel and the writer. And the Beat Generation also got nationwide recognition in the United States with the popularity of the novel.

Millstein stresses the spiritual qualities of Kerouac's novel as he talks about the various characters in the novel who are "excesses ... made to serve a spiritual purpose, the purpose of an affirmation still unfocused, still to be defined, unsystematic" (27). In instant review of the novel, Millstein pointed out the presence of spiritual purpose. In other words, the characters are on a quest for belief in something. Matt Theado, in *Understanding Jack Kerouac*, asserts that "*On the Road* is a story about two young men, travel the American continent looking outwardly for kicks and inwardly for salvation" (57). From outside, it looks like that they are just making road trips for their pleasures but inwardly they are searching transcendence in their inner selves. Characters in the novel like Sal and Dean are in search of spirituality throughout novel. They are like vagabond and seeking for god.

David Dempsey, contemporary of Millstein, in the book review of *The New York Times*, says: "Jack Kerouac has written an enormously readable and entertaining book but one reads it in the same mood that he might visit a side show the freaks are fascinating although they are hardly part of our lives" (3). He gave favorable remark that the novel was a stunning achievement but notices the lack of characterization in the novel. Dempsey remarks that Kerouac's characters "are not developed but simply presented; they perform, take their bows and do a hand-spring into the wings" (3). There is no depth in characterization. Characters are given and illustrated rather than developed.

Many critics also are impressed with Kerouac's talent, but they also noted some flaws in the novel. Critics accused Kerouac of being a solipsist saying that *On*

the Road is excessively autobiographical in content which is impossible to discuss as a novel. They charged Kerouac's use of hipster slang and spontaneous prose was nothing more than meaningless babble, which is unable to express anything in words. Though, novel got some negative criticism from literary circle, it became one of the best seller novels in America. In this context, Claudia Durst Johnson and Vernon Johnson in *The Social Impact of the Novel: A Reference Guide*, state:

Despite the novel's hostile reception by literary critics, Kerouac's novel took America by storm, not only in its huge sales but in its frenzied generation of fans and cults. Kerouac was immediately besieged with offers to appear on television, to be interviewed by popular and fashionable magazines. (307)

Here, Johnson and Johnson clarify the popularity of *On the Road* in spite of unfavorable criticism from many critics. *On the road* took a speed in its sale as well it laid impacts on American culture. With the popularity of *On the Road*, Kerouac also got unexpected popularity in media as well.

On the Road, although, by many critics is taken as the bible of Beat Generation, but Ralph Gleason, in *The Saturday Review*, denied that *On the Road* is a "Beat" novel:

Even though Kerouac himself and many of his admirers speaks of "the Beat Generation," this is not true. To be Beat means to be "Beat to the socks," down and out, discouraged and without hope. And not once in *On the Road*, no matter how sordid the situation nor how miserable the people, is there no hope? That is the great thing about Kerouac's book, and incidentally, this generation. They swing ... unlike a member of a generation that is really Beat, Kerouac leaves you with no feeling of

despair, but rather of exaltation. (75)

For Gleason, 'beat' really means beaten down or discouraged without hope but he found Kerouac's novel having life and hope everywhere as they lean forward to the next crazy thing. They are not depressed and discouraged but full of life and excitement.

Some critics see the meaninglessness of the road trips of characters. They do not find characters are on the road in search for the new experiences and authentic meaning in life. Carole Gottlib Vopat, in *Jack Kerouac's On the Road*, writes: "Kerouac's characters take to the road not to find life but to leave it all behind: emotion, maturity, change, decision, purpose, and especially in the best American tradition, responsibility: wives, children ... strew along like a broken glass" (5). Here, Vopat sees characters, being on the road, are not finding life or any meaning rather they are fleeing from self-analysis and self-awareness. Making themselves roaming around the country, they leave their emotion, decision, purpose behind and not let themselves to be mature. These characters leave behind the great life with happy marriage, children and stability.

Kerouac's *On the Road* became the roadmap for the followers of counterculture and hippie movement that followed after 1960s. Erik Mortenson also talks in same way about *On the Road* as it gave a way to counterculture of 1960s in the book *Capturing the Beat Moment: Cultural Politics and the Poetics of Presence*. Here, Mortenson states about *On the Road* as: "The novel included a new cultural movement as well, altering society to an undercurrent of dissent and dissatisfaction with the conformity of post war life that would eventually erupt into full scale social revolution in the sixties" (27). The novel became inspiration for those people who were not satisfied with social conformity of post war era and provided an avenue for

the great Cultural Revolution called Hippie movement that followed in America in the decade of 1960s and 1970s. At the same context, Jamie Russell in *The Beat Generation*, states:

There are certain novels that capture the zeitgeist, occasionally to such an extent that they become milestone for decade. *On the Road* is just such a book. It was the hymn to the American dream of self-reliance, individualism, and freedom that came to epitomize the beat Generation and, importantly laid the foundation for the counterculture of the 1960s. (1952)

As Russell describes, *On the Road*, becoming the song of self-reliance in prepackaged lifestyle of postwar America, laid foundation for the cultural movement of next decade.

Many critics compare this novel of Kerouac with Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun also Rises*. Many critics consider Kerouac's *On the Road* as a novel which captures the essence of the generation that emerged in America after World War Second, as they consider Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* captured the essence of Post-World War I America. Gilbert Millstein in the book review of *The New York Times*, writes: "*The Sun Also Rises* came to be regarded as the testament of the 'Lost Generation,' so it seems certain that *On the Road* will come to be known as that of the 'Beat Generation'" (27). This novel of Kerouac is generally accepted as the portrayal of generation after Second World War America. This is true because from its publication, it is regarded as a testament for Beat Generation. The characters in the novel accept the sentiments of previous generation; Lost Generation. Lost generation also shares the same sentiments of depression, despair and loss in humanity in their country's condition after First World War. So, this comparison is important.

Kerouac's *On the Road* is inarguably a postmodern novel. In the novel, most of the characters go against the mainstream values and prevailing authorities. They choose freedom instead of responsibility, prefer spending instead of saving, prefer madness instead of sensibility, search liberation in sexuality instead of rigidity, enjoy African American culture and minorities (jazz and negro) than white middle class society. They create a new way of living. They totally go against mainstream culture values. They disrupted the so called central social values and tied themselves with minorities. Stefano Maffina, in the book *Role of Kerouac's Identity in the Development of his Poetics*, says: "Hence, the narrator in *On the Road* tried to identify himself with the minorities of the time, as a From this perspective, the writer could then be considered a "postmodern", and "postcolonial" writer" (89). So, in the novel there is celebration of minorities. Characters want to be part or member of so called minority group like Negro and Mexican culture. They want to disrupt the center of society and become sympathetic to the minorities.

Gender is an important issue in the novel. This novel presents very pathetic condition of women and sexist view of men towards women. There are the vast differences between sexes, whereas women get domestic world and men get outer world. James Penner, in the book *Pinks, Pansies and Punks: The Rhetoric of Masculinity in American Literary Culture*, states:

Further most part, the beats innovative redefining of gender roles did not extend to women and their respective roles. Despite their sexually unconventional pairings, the women of Kerouac's novel still remain homemakers who personify domestically and in many respects the antithesis of freedom and the solitary life on the road. (125)

Here, Penner points out that beats' effort to redefine gender roles could not bring

change in the role and condition of women. Women's condition in the novel is quite opposite to the life of men in the novel who are seeking extreme freedom and personal life through the road.

Thus, Jack Kerouac's second novel *On the Road* has received various criticisms from various angles. Some critics focused on the writing style of Kerouac in the novel, some critics focused on spiritual aspect and some others gave their attention towards the cultural aspect of the novel. But they have talked less about the exercise of masculinity and issue of gender which this study is going to explore. So, this study aims to deal with the gender issue prevailed in the novel from the perspective of masculinity.

CHAPTER TWO

Development of the Beat Movement

Meaning of Beat

Jack Kerouac introduced the phrase "Beat Generation" in 1948 to characterize a perceived underground, anti-conformist youth movement in New York. The term arose in a conversation with writer John Clellon Holmes where Kerouac allows that it was street hustler Herbert Huncke who originally used the phrase "Beat", in an earlier discussion with him. Brenda Knight, in her book *Women of the Beat Generation: The Writers, Artists, and Muses at the Heart of a Revolution*, writes:

The adjective "Beat" could colloquially mean "tired" or "Beaten down" or Beat musical rhythm but Kerouac and Ginsberg appropriated the image and altered the meaning to include the connotations "upbeat", "Beatific", and the musical association of being "on the Beat". (53)

Here, according to Knight, being 'Beat' means being beaten down or out casted.

'Beat' also suggest to the beat of music. The father figures of beat generation appropriated the image of 'beaten down' and include the connotations like 'upbeat' and 'Beatific' to the term. They interpreted term beat as hope and state of being happy and being on the beat of music, means being on the movement.

In the context of meaning of 'Beat', literary critic Gregory Stephenson in *The Daybreak Boys: Essays on the Literature of the Beat Generation*, says: Jack Kerouac coined the term "Beat" in 1948" (2) and mentioned it several times in *On the Road*. According to Kerouac, it is a synonym of "Beatific", a personal state of peace and happiness (4): "He (Dean Moriarty) was BEAT – the root, the soul of Beatific" (184). Again, he has used it as an overall term for the young men and women who are

“rising from the underground, the sordid hipsters of America, a new Beat Generation that I (Sal Paradise) was slowly joining” (53) and like this, Kerouac baptized his generation as beat generation and defined beat generation as a generation that was rising from underground America.

Historical Development of the Beats

After the Second World War, American economy was taking boom, as America was leading capitalism. Post -World War II Americans wanted to have secured job, happy marriage, nice family, well-deserved retirement and a wide variety of goods. There was a kind of conformity and a straight conduct to live a life. Though there were many people who were not happy with such condition, Beat Generation became the first to raise the voice against such tendencies. Brenda Knight, in *Women of the Beat Generation: The Writers, Artists, and Muses at the Heart of a Revolution*, writes:

Postwar American was the richest, most powerful nation in the world, blustering with industry, pride, and the Puritan obsession with work and perfection. Or so it seemed. As it turns out, not everyone in America shared this swaggering posture. The Beats were simply the first to very vocally and artistically decry American materialism and conformity.

(3)

America, after World War Second was emphasizing perfection, economic progress and discipline for living life. Though there were other people who were also depressed with the condition of country, Beats became the first to give voice to a silent generation and outlet their feeling of unhappiness and discontent with the social conformity of that time.

In the same context, David S. Kidder and Noah D. Oppenheim in *The*

Intellectual Devotional Modern Culture: Revive Your Mind, Complete Your Education, and Converse Confidently with the Culturati, say:

Although the 1950s in America are remembered as a time of a social conformity, by the middle of the decade, elements of artistic society had begun to rebel against this conformity. In the coffee shops and bookstores of three urban neighborhoods in particular San Francisco's North Beach, Los Angeles' Venice West and New York City's Greenwich Village- writers and poets formed a new literary undercurrent that came to be labeled the Beat Movement. (198)

Especially, centered in urban areas like New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles the Beats opposed to the modernity of the time and its social and political conformity.

Beats started questioning the growing materialism of their society. They found capitalism as destructive to the humanity and antithetical to social equality. They completely went against the conformity of society and searched alternative way to live their life. They chose freedom instead of responsibilities, they preferred spending instead of saving, preferred madness instead of sensibility, searched liberation in sexuality instead of rigidity, searched spiritualism instead of materialism, used drugs heavily, celebrated African American culture like jazz than white middle class culture and created a new way of writing.

Beats emerged in opposition to the dominant, middle-class, suburban culture of the 1950s America. Major Beat works like *On the Road*, *Howl* show frequent attacks on the mainstream social values like material consumption, sexual rigidity and time-bounding and prepackaged social life. In *Age of Contradiction: American Thought and Culture in the 1960s*, Howard Brick talks about beats like this:

The Beat complaint against acquisitive materialism, rigid social roles

and psychic repression – answered by the search for a fullness of personal experience that broke the bounds of conversation and lifted one above the mundane was hardly new. (144)

In fact, the Beats were the first to protest against the supposed conformity and lack of social concern among middle-class Americans.

Jennie Skerl, in *Reconstructing the Beats*, defines beats as Beats were “an avant-garde arts movement and bohemian subculture” (1) that appeared in the 1940s and received public attention in the 1950s. This arts and youth community wanted to create a new culture countering the dominant mainstream culture in America. Criticizing materialism, the Beats sought a “spiritual alternative to the relentless materialist drive of industrial capitalism” (2) which opposed the social conformity.

The people who were accepting social conformities could not understand those youth who did not want to work, though there was availability of good paying jobs. Older generation, who had faced so many hardships to live their life, did not understand the disloyalties of those youth towards those new possibilities and availabilities in country. So, Beats became radical and they gave birth to a new movement in post-World War II America and that was Beat Generation.

Beat Generation is the generation that created a wide literary ground for followers of counterculture. Beat movement was never a large movement in terms of its life span and its members, but in terms of its influence and cultural status, it was more popular than any other competing aesthetic. It came up with some leading figures like Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg and William S. Burroughs when they became friend to each other around 1944 in Colombia University and their friendship gave birth to an influential literary movement. John David Wells, in the book *The Twilight of Romanticism: Lives and Literature in French Bohemian Culture*,

discusses about the founding figures of beat generation as:

Kerouac, Ginsberg and Burroughs are all considered by literary critics as the ‘big three’ in the Beat phenomenon, and together in the late 1940s formed friendships that would result in the cultural explosion known as the beat Generation and hyped up by the media as “weird Beatniks”. (13)

So, the friendship of Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg and William S. Burroughs added a new cultural revolution in the history of America known as Beat Generation.

Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg and William S Burroughs are the father figures for this generation. Beside these figure, John Clellon Holmes, Grey Snyder, Michael McClure, Philip Whalen, Amiri Baraka, Peter Orlovsky, Lew Welch, Herbert Huncke, and Ted Jones followed this generation. Some women writers like Joanne Kyger, Joyce Johnson, Carolyn Cassady, Edie Parker, Harriet Sohmers Zwerling, Ruth Weiss, Diane Di Prima and Hettie Jones also paid their contribution to Beat generation.

The Beat Generation pulled from a variety of source materials to construct their particular vision of literature and culture. They are influenced by their previous generation, generation after First World War, known as Lost Generation and Hipsterism. Beside this, romanticism, surrealism and absurd philosophy also influence beat writings and writers. At the same time, the American transcendental movement of the nineteenth century was a powerful inspiration for the Beats.

Transcendentalism is an American literary, political, and philosophical movement of the early nineteenth century, centered on Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau. Transcendentalists operated with the sense that new era was at hand. They were critics of their contemporary society for their unthinking conformity,

so did the Beats. Lee McRae, in magazine, *Beatdom- Issue Four*, states: “The beats ideas of reformation, revolt, and revolution hold the roots among the great thinkers of this period” (64). The Beats also revolted against the conformity of society as transcendentalist revolted against puritan conformity of society and church. Beats rejected the artistic production of American modernist in many ways. They rejected T.S. Eliot as he was very much difficult to understand and too much detached from real life and experiences.

The time of the Beat generation can be divided into two distinct periods or phases; the underground period from 1944 to 1956 and the public period from 1956 to 1962. Some writings of Beat generation had started to appear already in the early fifties. For example, Kerouac’s *Town and the City* in 1950, Holmes’s *Go* in 1952, and William S Burroughs’ *Junkie* but they were not in recognition until the publication of *Howl* in 1956. And with the publication of Ginsberg’s *Howl* Beats came into outer world.

The publication of Allen Ginsberg’s *Howl* in 1956 marked a turning point in the history of Beat literature, as well as American literature in general. There is a vicious rage against the system which requires conformity. There is open appeal for the freedom in homosexuality in the poem and there is use of foul and slang language. These things were shocking to the 1950s establishment and *Howl* got obscenity trial which Ginsberg won. In 1957, Jack Kerouac published his novel *On the Road* which became another hallmark of Beat Generation. *Naked Lunch* appeared in 1959, written by William S. Burroughs which also became a landmark creation of Beats. With their literary work, the Beat Generation laid precious impact on the formation of modern American society. Through *Howl*, Ginsberg became able to stop a kind of censorship in the realm of literature. Modern poetry also got relaxation in the

structure and style.

Beat Generation got various criticism from various angles of the society. The intellectual and academic group view Beats as anti-intellectual. Mainstream American society was frightened by their sexual openness and drug use. American Senator Joseph McCarthy labeled Beat movement and Beat's behavior as Communist and a serious problem to nation's security. But the Beat figures patiently and effectively accepted all of these accuses without being separated.

Beat to Hippie

The Beat Generation faded from its view as quickly as it appeared. It quickly transformed into the Beatniks. In late 1950s, this term 'Beatnik' became famous but no any resemblance to the Beat Generation writers. Beats were not 'Beatniks'. They never appreciate the term. It was a stereotyped, often derogatory image of some of the things associated with them. James A Swartz in his book *Substance Abuse in America: A Documentary and Reference Guide*, talks about the origin of the term 'beatnik' like this:

Herb Caen, a columnist who wrote about social scene for the San Francisco Chronicle coined the term beatnik, a premature of the word beat and sputnik, the recently launched Soviet satellite. His perception was the beat generation was simply a bunch of lazy bohemians. (116)

Herb Cane associate 'beat' with 'nik' from Russian satellite Sputnik that suggest beats are communist who are rejecting the capitalist economy of their country. He simply defines them as useless bohemians.

As soon as Herb Caen coined the term Beatnik, it spread everywhere; books, television etc. Companies and media instantly used the term Beatnik as a marketing tool. Beatnik became the stereotype of the actual Beat Generation. These Beatniks

were anti-materialistic, slang using, black beret –wearing, bongo-playing, jazz listening hipster narrating nonsensical poetry in dark coffee-house. It is a media stereotype of the late 1950s and early 1960s that displayed the more superficial aspects of the Beat Generation's literary movement of the 1950s.

In the context of Beatnik, James Campbell, in *This is the Beat Generation*, writes:

By the middle of 1959, it seemed as though you could hardly open a magazine without encountering a photograph or a caricature in the fashion department as much as in the feature pages of the typical Beatnik: loose- fitting hooped t- shirt, beret, goatee beard, sunglasses, poetry book in hand, for chicks, subtract the beard and add deep fringe heavy eye makeup. (246)

Lifestyle of Beats became the fashion to these beatniks. In many ways, they adopted the lifestyle of original beats but they added some other things like fashionable clothes and heavy makeup.

Beside those issues of fashion, the original Beats lost their originality and transformed in cartoon characters. The original Beats transformed into Beatnik stereotype. In their actual lives, Beats never acted out like cartoons and they were not interested in fashion. They were individuals who rejected conformity society to find their own way.

During the 1960s, the various aspects the Beat movement transform into the extensive counterculture movement of the 1960s, followed by a shift in terminology from Beat to Beatnik to Hippie. The Hippie subculture was originally a youth movement that arose in the United States during the mid-1960s and spread to other countries around the world.

The word 'Hippie' came from hipster, and was used to describe Beatniks. Beatnik slowly changed into hippies. The major difference between the Hippies and the Beatniks is that the Hippies were more aggressively political and public than the Beatniks. The Beatniks were a smaller group that was centered on art and artists and followers of Beat literary figures like Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg. In their own way, they rejected contemporary society's values.

On the other side, Hippies had a very clear public presence. They shared some common features of Beat generation like experimentation with sexuality and drugs and rejection materialism. Unlike the Beats, the Hippies were very explicitly political. They actively involved in civil right movement and anti-war movement. They felt that they could change the world through their actions in a way that the Beats did not. Many of the original Beats remained active participants; mainly Allen Ginsberg was attached to antiwar movement.

While discussing on Hippie movement and its features, Christopher Mele, in *Selling the Lower East Side: Culture, Real Estate, and Resistance in New York City*, writes: "The hippie phenomenon emerged as an umbrella counterculture movement that encompassed many different social groups, cultural practices, political ideas ... peace, nonviolence, free use of drugs and liberal sex, among many others" (159).

Hippie movement is taken as the wide counterculture movement which includes the common features of Beats. But, unlike Beats, who were centered on literary world without involving them into the political and public sphere of life, Hippies were very much aware about the concept of social change. Basically, Hippie revolted against Vietnam War.

Beat movement is often considered to have its influence on Hippie movement of 1960s and 70s. Beats' counterculture activities and literary writing prepared a way

for new kind of social revolution that followed in 1960s and 70s. In the book *America in Revolt During the 1960s and 1970s*, Rodney Carlisle, and J. Geoffrey Golson describe Counterculture Movement as: “Counterculture, often described as “rebellious against the establishment” is a term used to describe a movement that swept the United States in the 1960s and 1970s” (173). In such kind of revolution, Beat’s writing became very influential as they further say: “Counterculture writers of the 1950s reflected the new consciousness, which became the ground breaking for the social and cultural revolution of the 1960s” (176). Through literature, Beats planted a wide ground for Hippie movement of 1960s and 1970s.

Again, while discussing on Beats’ contribution on Hippie movement Raj Chandarlapy in *The Beat Generation and Counterculture: Paul Bowels, William S. Burroughs, and Jack Kerouac* talks in the same way: “Beats were often best remembered for creating the literary framework for modern counterculture, the Hippie generation, and so on for and so forth” (1). Thus, Hippie movement of 1960s and 1970s is an expanded form of counterculture activity of 1950s.

After the Beat Movement, Ginsberg and Burroughs successfully made the transition into the 1960s. Ginsberg became very active in the Peace Movement. He and Burroughs were embraced by contemporary artists and musicians until their deaths in 1997.

Characteristics of Beat Generation

Every literary movement has its own particular features that made it different from other aesthetic. Beat Generation also has its own peculiar features which made this movement so much radical and controversial. Anti-materialism, sexual liberation, experimentation with drugs and alcohol, searching spirituality, celebration of Buddhism or eastern religion, respect to the jazz music, innovation of new writing

styles are some major characteristics of Beat Generation.

As a reaction against traditional sexual patterns, Beat advocated for homosexuality and liberation on heterosexual relationship through their writings and in their life also they maintained such kind of sexual relationship. They redefined the sexuality and totally challenged the concept of rigid sexuality of that time America. In the book *Reader's Guide to Lesbian and Gay*, Mario Paduano says: "While many writers engaged in the same sex or group sexual activity, they all challenged hegemonic definition of sexuality that ruled American life" (81). Beats reject rigidity in sexual relation and involved themselves in alternative sexual practices. The Beats differed from this dominant view by largely avoiding single marriage or redefining commitment, so sexual relationship could be more open.

Allen Ginsberg, one of the beat figures, is widely known for his homosexuality. He had his homosexual relation with Peter Orlovsky. Another personality of the Beat movement, Williams Burroughs was also interested in unnatural sex. Jack Kerouac had three wives in his life and preferred heterosexuality then homosexuality. Neal Cassady was heterosexual and homosexual both. The relationship between Lucien Carr and David is another example of famous homosexual relationship in Beat Generation.

In the writings of Beats, they shear their sexual life as well. *Howl* by Allen Ginsberg contains several metaphors and portrays of the incidents of Ginsberg's personal life, and life of people around him. There is the celebration of homosexuality and appeal for the freedom of homosexuality. In *Neal's Ashes*, Ginsberg describes his affection towards Neal in detail. William S Burroughs' *Naked Lunch* contains use of narcotics and pedophilia. Another work, *Queer* also deals with the subject matter of homosexuality. Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* also is the portrayal of homosexuality,

heterosexuality through the main characters like Dean and Sal, representative of Neal and Jack respectively.

Beat Generation is generally featured with its experimentation with drugs and alcohols. Almost all the Beats were heavily involved in use of drugs and alcohol which became the reason for their early death. Experimenting with drugs was central to the Beat culture because they believed that they were beneficial for multiple reasons. Many of them thought that drugs can be helpful to increase their creativity. Marijuana, Benzedrine, Morphine were famous among Beats. This use of drug became more intense in hippie era. Most of the drug usage was experimental in that people were often initially unfamiliar with the effects of these drugs. The first members of the Beat Generation used lots of Marijuana and alcohol throughout the course of the 1950's and the trend not only continued but strengthened as time went on.

Drugs and alcohol got special focus in their writings. *Howl* describes the lives of drug addicts and alcoholics. Like this, *On the Road* also has great deal with drugs and alcohol. Characters in the novel celebrate every moment of their life with drugs and alcohol.

The prominent figures of Beat Generation like Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg and William S. Burroughs made them free from traditional style of writing and invented their own style of writing literature. Kerouac, being inspired by spontaneity of jazz music, originated his own writing style “spontaneous prose” which he had used in his novel *On the Road* at first and his prose writings after his novel *On the Road*. Allen Ginsberg started long lost tradition of loud reading of poetry through his famous poem *Howl*. Burroughs introduced new style of writing called cut-up method.

Beside these features, celebration of jazz is also one of the features of Beat

Generation. Beats had great interest on jazz music. They wanted the same speed and spontaneity as jazz music used to be and they also wanted to present their voice spontaneously. At this, Robert Bunnett in *Beat Culture: Lifestyle, Icons and Impact*, says: “Beat literature is overflowing with description of jazz clubs, jazz records, jazz musicians, and jazz performances and they are almost invariably described in a style that imitates more or less successfully, the dynamic energy of bebop jazz” (341). Jazz is scattered everywhere in Beat literature. They tried their best to equate the speed and energy of jazz on their literary creation outlet their voice spontaneously. Kerouac’s spontaneous prose is the outcome of jazz music. Buddhism is also another feature of Beat Generation. Notably Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg were influenced by Buddhist philosophy. Kerouac’s the *Dharma Bums* is a novel which deals with Buddhism.

Beat generation as a sub culture, disrupted the so called central values of mainstream American society after Second World War. This generation disrupted so called central values, culture and western logo centrist of that time and became sympathetic to so called marginalize group like Negro, Mexican and eastern religion as Buddhism. Writers of this generation like Kerouac, Ginsberg, and Burroughs, created a new technique which is quite different from contemporary writers. Burroughs’ *Naked Lunch* is taken as the novel of post modern writing because of its use of cut-up method.

Gender and Masculinity

Gender is the range of characteristics pertaining to, and differentiating between, masculinity and femininity. Gender is always a social and cultural construction. It is not determined just by our sex organs. Sex is biological. It includes our genetic makeup, our hormones, our body parts, especially our sex and

reproductive organs but gender includes a complex mix of beliefs, behaviors, culture, language and other characteristics.

Gender refers to society's expectations about how people should think and act as girls and boys, and women and men. Gender is generally defined as a set of attitudes, behaviors, and self-presentation methods ascribed to members of a certain biological sex, and masculinity and femininity are its parts. While discussing about gender, Maria Louise Stig Sorensen in *Gender Archaeology*, writes:

Gender is the best understood as a set of values that assign gendered meaning to behavior and affect that behavior. Through such meaning, culturally specific notions of femininity and masculinity if what it means to be a woman or a man, and various variations on these themes are constructed. (1808)

Culture determines gender roles and what is feminine and what is masculine. The Feminine traits are ways of behaving that our culture usually associates with being a girl or women. Masculine traits are ways of behaving that our culture usually associates with being a boy or man. Masculinity concerns the position of man in a gender relation. It can be defined as the pattern of practice by which people engage that position.

Masculinity is a topic that has been debated in our society very often.

Masculinity has certain characteristics assigned to it by our culture and it always comes with of femininity. It is very hard to define masculinity in its own term and characteristic as it always linked up with femininity. R.W. Connell, in his book *Masculinities: Second Edition*, says: 'Masculinity' does not exist except in contrast with femininity" (68) and simply he defines masculinity as "non femininity" (70).

While defining masculinity in full length, R.W. Connell, in the same book states:

All societies have the accounts of gender but not all have the concept of 'masculinity'; in its modern usages the term assumes the one's behavior results from the type of person one is. That is to say, an unmasculine person would behave differently; being peaceful rather than violent, conciliatory rather than dominating, hardly able to kick a football, uninterested in sexual conquest and so forth. (67)

Here, Connell directly connects personal characteristics like violent, dominating and interested in sexual conquest to the masculinity. Generally, in society, these features are connected with man.

There are some traditional masculine norms as avoidance of femininity, restricted emotion and sex disconnected from intimacy, pursuit of achievement and status, self-reliance, strength, and aggression and homophobia. These norms serve to produce and reproduce gender roles by symbolically associating specific attributes and characteristics with each other. Masculinity placed women in a subordinate position in society. What masculine is simply what man does.

Masculinity is not concerned with what man and women are rather it is concerned with what is their role according to their society, culture, age, ethnicity and circumstances and what they do. Masculinity refers to the behaviors, social roles and relations of men within a given society, culture as well as the meaning attributed to them. Unlike male, which stresses biological sex, the term masculinity stresses gender, a social and cultural construction. When we link masculinity to the culture, automatically, we can evaluate it as diverse, mobile, and unstable construction because culture itself is diverse, unstable and mobile. It is indexical of class, subculture, age and ethnicity among other factors. It is the process of acculturation of man in society which made them superior in society.

About the relation between culture and masculinity, John Beynon in the book *Masculinities and Culture* states that “Masculinity is the child of culture shaped differently at deferent circumstances in different places by individuals or groups” (21). Masculinity is an issue of culture that takes its shape in accordance with specific culture of specific geography. Though masculinity is a cultural product and diverse but in essence, in almost all cultures, masculinity expects man to be subjects and women to be objects.

In many cultures, men are supposed to be aggressive, tall, handsome, bold, courageous, rough, tough, emotionless, insensitive, fearless and practical. They should not be soft, submissive or weak. They must not show emotions, feelings and tears. They should never reject from a physical fight. They should choose careers like doctors, engineers, military, managers, drivers, police etc which are consider being manly. A real man is expected to have hobbies such as smoking, drinking, fast driving, and playing outdoor sports like cricket, football, etc. They should not have hobbies like cooking, sewing, dancing, etc. and they should have authority over female.

Opposite of men, women are expected to be submissive, passive, emotional, householder, homemakers, mothers, and societal caretakers. They are taught to accept the authority of men over them. These all categorization are connected with patriarchy. So, while concerning about masculinity, study about patriarchy is essential. In *Men and Masculinities*, Niels Sampath writes: “masculine identity has tended to be subsumed in to studies of ‘patriarchy’ and its effects on society and women in particular rather than studied for its own sake” (48). Masculinity is directly connected with patriarchy. Patriarchal system of society provides men the power to rule over women from various angels. So while studying masculinity, patriarchy and

its effect should be considered.

Masculinity, as an academic disciplinary field emerged in the last few decades of 20th century. It is inspired by feminism. It deals with the diversity of identities, behaviors and meanings that occupy the masculine and it does not assume that they are universal. While biological 'maleness' varies little, the role, behaviors, bodies and identities that are thought of as masculine varies enormously.

In study of masculinity, 'Hegemonic masculinity' is popular and dominant. Hegemonic masculinity is the socially dominant form of masculinity in a particular culture within a given historical period. It is a concept popularized by sociologist R. W. Connell. He writes in his *Masculinities: Second Edition* about 'Hegemonic Masculinity' as:

Hegemonic Masculinity can be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women. (77)

As described above, hegemony is a sociological term that is used to analyze the class relations refers to the cultural dynamic by which a group claims and sustains a leading position in social life. So, hegemonic masculinity guarantees the dominant position of men and subordinate position of women which is considered to be legitimate in patriarchy.

Gender and Masculinity in Beat Generation

Beat Generation became so much controversial in the context of gender issue. This aesthetic got severe attack by so many critics because of its attitude towards women. This generation is very unkind to women. Many critics see this generation as

being very masculine. Beats, as they disrupted mainstream social values in almost all the phenomenon but in case of gender role they gave continuation to mainstream values and clearly maintain sexism in their real life as well in their writings. They performed near about all the qualities of masculine gender roles.

Beat culture was dominated by men and it would be meaningless to assume that females were their equals. Because literary scene was competitive and sexism was largely unchallenged, female Beats gained little recognition. Joanne Kyger, Joyce Johnson, Carolyn Cassady, Edie Parker, Harriet Sohmers Zwerling, Ruth Weiss, Diane Di Prima and Hettie Jones were some female writers who paid their contribution for the development of beat writing but as a generation, it was dominated by male.

While discussing on women writers' condition in the Beat Generation, Amy L. Friedman in *Beat Generation Writers* says that "While both men and women were writing, reading, aloud, editing and publishing, the beat milieu was male dominated, with patriarchal attitudes and an overwhelmingly male orientation" (201). Though there was presence of female writers in Beat Movement, male Beats excluded women from their group. Most of the female in Beat Generation are popular because of their relationship with the Beats.

It seems as if the Beats managed to remove the taboos around the subject of sexuality and tried to redefine the gender roles. But somehow they forgot, or actively omitted the liberation of women with their own behavior. James Penner, in *Pinks, Pansies and Punks: The Rhetoric of Masculinity in American Literary Culture*, argues:

The Beats introduced a male figure who is less interested in maintaining the borders between the masculine and the feminine and

who represents a movement away from the restrictive, hard-boiled masculinity of the Per-World War II generation. The Beats' willingness to contest the rigid male gender roles of 1950s and their self-styled sexual experimentation indirectly contributed to an enlargement of the social parameters of masculinity. (147)

Though, Beats tried to redefine gender issues of society, their own lifestyle did not let them to do that. Their liberal views towards sexual experimentation further strengthen the masculine power in their generation.

Women in Postwar II America had to be good housewives, give birth to children, take care of their children and be sexual play things for their husbands. Brenda Knight in *Women of the Beat Generation: The Writers, Artists and Muses at the Heart of a Revolution*, states: "women of the fifties in particular were supposed to conform like Jell-O to a mold. There was only one option: to be a housewife or a mother" (3). They are supposed to be performing domestic roles being a wife or mother. The outer world is considered to belong to the man. So, Beats also went along with same gender roles.

Beats were a boy gang and Beat Generation is that generation which ignored women largely more than any other aesthetic though that is modern aesthetic. Helen McNeil, in *Beat Generation Writers*, states that "The discourse, the definition and the often punishing lifestyle of the Beat Generation was set by the man, even more than in other literary Avant-gardes" (178). So, avoiding femininity, Beat Generation built on masculine and patriarchal ideology.

The Beat movement happened in 1940s and 1950s, just before the decades of women rights movement. Above discussed attitude of Beats towards women and gender played an important role for women right and civil right movement in the

decades of 1960s and 1970s. Beats' attitudes towards women are illustrated in the representative work of Beat writers. Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* includes misogynistic beliefs such as the idea that attractive women stir men into acts of procreation and thereby become pregnant and give birth to children who are doomed to die.

CHAPTER THREE

On the Road as a Beat Novel

This chapter tries to search and examine the prominent characteristics of Beat in Jack Kerouac's novel *On the Road* and how the characters represent the different characteristics and different phenomenon of beat culture. This chapter tries to explore the lifestyle of beats on the one hand and on the other hand their practice of continuing masculinity by examining their view towards women and gender role in their culture.

Beats and Their Lifestyle

Sal and Dean are two representative male figures in the novel, who from every point of view, deserve the characters of beats. Sal and Dean through their cross country road trips, search for liberation, meaning and spirituality in their lives by involving themselves into the use of different drugs, drinking alcohol, having many sexual relations, celebrating the beat of jazz music and escaping from their responsibilities. Beside Sal and Dean, Carlo Max, Old Bull Lee, Chad King, Ed Dunkel, Roy Jonson and many others are also living the life as beats.

Sal and Dean start their cross country road trips in search for new experiences in their life. They go to road in search of meaning which they fail to get in capitalist American society of Post-World War Second. Sal's background is different from Dean's but still Sal follows Dean because he finds "a youth tremendously excited with life" (6) in Dean. Sal's road life begins when he meets Dean:

I first met Dean not long after my wife and I had just gotten over a serious illness that I won't bother to talk about, except that it had something to do with a miserable weary split –up my feeling that

everything was dead. With the coming of Dean Moriarty began the part of life you could call my life on the road. (3)

Sal starts his journey with Dean to get meaning in life. He is also depressed after his split with his wife. He is feeling as life is meaningless. So, in search for meaning and new experience in life he follows Dean.

Dean is young man who is very energetic and wants to live a life with extreme freedom. Every moment of his life he seeks for new experiences. Sal describes the past life of Dean as:

In the west he'd spent a third of his time in the poolhall, a third in jail, and a third of his time in the public library. They'd seen him rushing eagerly down the winter streets, bareheaded, carrying books to the poolhall, or climbing trees to get into the attics of buddies where he spent days reading or hiding from the law. (7)

From this extract, it can be traced out that Dean is a criminal, an intellectual and a person who wants to do exciting things underneath the law. Dean had spent some of his life in jail. His activities are quite indigestible as he rushes in the street in winter with bear headed. It can be easily assumed that the society obviously feels Dean is crazy, mad and not suitable for the mainstream society.

Dean as a perfect example of true beat and shares a kind of madness, and this madness is not acceptable in mainstream culture and society. Everyone in the novel sees a mad and crazy youth in Dean except Sal. Sal describes Dean as a mad prophet several times. For Sal, Dean's madness is a kind of energy from which Dean can live a very spontaneous life. For Sal, the only people worth knowing are "the mad ones, the ones who are mad to live, mad to talk, mad to be saved" (8). For Sal, those people who can go out of daily social conduct and can make a way to live their own life in

their own way are worth living. And for this, Dean is a perfect person. So, Sal time and again joins Dean's madness to the beauty as "the madness of Dean had bloomed into a weird flower" (113). The same metaphor is used again when Sal reflects that "the crazy flowers bloom (in New York) too" (125). So, most of the people in novel do not appreciate madness of Dean, Sal praises the same madness. Being influenced by the energy of Dean, Sal sees Dean as his mentor and goes along with Dean in the trip of cross-country.

Sal has a circle of all intellectual and educated friends. He is in boy gang where Dean, Carlo Max, Chad King, Ed Dunkel, Roy Jonson, Remi Boucher, Tom Snark, Tim Grey are other members. He compares the intellectuality of his other friends with the intellectuality of Dean as:

All my other current friends were 'intellectuals' - Chad the Nietzschean anthropologist, Carlo Max and his nutty surrealist low-voiced serious staring talk, Old Bull Lee and his critical anti-everything drawl- or else they were slinking criminals like Elmer Hassel, with that hip sneer; Jane lee the same, sprawled on the Oriental cover of her couch, sniffing at the *New Yorker*. But Dean's intelligence was every bit as formal and shining and complete, without the tedious intellectualness.

(9)

What we find from this excerpt is that all the friends of Sal are intellectual and well educated. They all are known about the philosophies of life and have bookish knowledge. But Dean is quite different from others as he has straight intellectuality with experience of life. Sal finds his friends of New York having bookish knowledge without firsthand experience.

Dean is the perfect example of a beat as he seeks extreme freedom in sex and

always escapes from responsibilities. He wants to disrupt every aspect of social values of mainstream society. In case of his sexual life, he is very open and wants to have sex with many women. He easily accepts his reality when a major asks him, “Moriarty, what’s this I hear about you sleeping with three girls at the same time? And Dean shuffled on the rug and said, ‘oh yes, oh yes, that’s the way it goes” (42). Here, Dean is having affair with three ladies at the same time but he has no any emotional attachment with those women. This behavior of Dean is quite horrible to the American society of Post World-War II. He has no any permanent home and stable way of living life. This is total contradiction to the mainstream society.

There are no any regularities of work in the life of these beats. They always hate jobs and cannot hold a single job for long period as other people are doing. They just hold a job for short period and leave for their search of pleasure. In Denver, when Remi tries to arrange a job of barrack guard for Sal, he does not show any interest. It can be seen when Sal says: “He arranged to get me the same kind of job he had, as a guard in the barracks. I went through the necessary routine, and to my surprise the bastards hired me” (56). While getting job, Sal is not happy and not thankful to the person who has selected him as an employee. America, after Second World War was creating plenty of job opportunities but along with Dean and Sal, most of the young characters in the novel seem jobless or let’s say they are voluntarily not interested in jobs.

As Sal has no interest in job, he is not very much strict in the rules and regulation he has to maintain. He has to prevent noises at night outside the barrack and has to make arrest to get promotion and continuing in job. But, activities of Sal while being in job, clearly show his disinterest in job. Sal, as guard of barrack has obligation to control noises made by some youth and it could be a very good chance

to make an arrest. But, he does not become strict towards those noise makers and leaves the place by taking two drinks. This is quite opposite behavior in comparison with the people of mainstream society for whom job is very important.

Sal discusses about those people for whom the same job is everything and doing the same job for years and they are proud of their jobs. Sal describes a cop as:

The cop who had been an Alcatraz guard was potbellied and about sixty, retired but unable to keep away from the atmosphere that had nourished his dry soul all his life. Every night he drove to work in his 35 Ford, punched the clock exactly on time, and sat down at the roll top desk. He labored painfully over the simple form we all had to fill out every night- rounds, time, what happened, and so on. (59)

People from mainstream society want promotions in their job. They want much through their job. Unlike Sal, they are so punctual on their work and time. They appreciate and love their jobs.

Sal is quite opposite to the people of mainstream society and does not respect the job opportunity and does not value money as primary. Sal has no effect of those cops and do not want to be in the same job for years as them. He is doing that just for living and without thinking about future and not for savings as Sal describes: “Remi was only trying to make a living and so was I, but these men wanted to make arrests and get compliments from the chief of police in town. They even said that if you didn’t make at least one a month you’d be fired” (58). So, here, Sal and his friends do not fit in to the society as they do not have any similarity with other people. As their country is making excellent progress on economy and leading capitalism, they just work for their living. They do not want other opportunities through their jobs and compliment from their seniors as other people eagerly want.

These characters do job till when they have got money to start next trip.

Not only Sal, same thing happens to Dean as well. He also does job and earns money but unlike people of society, he spends that money on his road trips. He never internalizes the responsibility of a father, of a husband. So, these beats spend money on drugs, beers and trips instead of saving for owning home and luxurious lifestyle which is prominent necessity of other people.

Though these beats do not engage them into work but they value time much. They do not want to let a minute waste. But they value time for their own sake and for their own enjoyment and life. More than Sal, Dean values time and every moment of his life is in schedule. One example of his perfect timekeeping is when he schedules his next meeting with Camille after Sal arrives in Denver for the first time:

It is now exactly one-fourteen. I shall be back at exactly three-fourteen, for our hour of reverie together, real sweet reverie, darling and then as you know, as I told you and as we agreed, I have to go and see the one legged lawyer about those papers –in the middle of the night, strange as it seems and I tho-ro-ly explained’ ... ‘so now in this exact minute I must dress, put on my pants, go back to life, that is outside life, streets and what not, as we agreed, it is now one-fifteen and time's running, running-’. (39)

Here is the irony in this passage. Dean has detail schedules in his life. He does not want to miss a second of life. But, every moment he spent time for his own life, his own business and his life on the street. Every moment of his life is very important for him.

A nation wants its young people to contribute in various aspects of country along with economic sector. Nation wants to maintain culture, custom and discipline

with young people. Dean and Sal are young people and country has many expectations with them. But they do not care about anything. They are not concerned about their country's need. They use time to fulfill their own personal desires, not the desire of others. This view of time is abruptly opposed to the common Post –World War II American view of time. In Post World War second America, time was employing people but in case of beats, it seems that they are employing time for their own ends.

In the novel, characters like Sal, Dean and others' behavior shows a kind of discontent with the capitalism of their country. Old Bull Lee strongly gives voice to this rage. He sees the destruction that capitalism is making in their country:

These bastards invented plastics by which they could make houses that last *forever*. tires. Americans are killing themselves by the millions every year with defective rubber tires that get hot on the road and blow up. They could make tires that never blow up....Same with clothes. They can make clothes that last forever. They prefer making cheap goods so's everybody'll have to go on working and punching timeclocks and organizing themselves in sullen unions and floundering around while the big grab goes on in Washington and Moscow. (135)

From this excerpt, it is clear that Old Bull Lee is not happy with country's capitalism. Capitalism is making people fool by not giving them the material that could last forever. People have to work hard like a machine to buy such materials. Authority is making cheap and weak materials though authority has sources and ideas to make durable materials.

Sal and Dean, in many ways celebrate minorities. When Sal and Dean go to Mexico City, they feel that people are happier there than in their own country. Their

own country is not offering them enough ecstasy, enough life, joy, kicks, and music. But Mexico City provides them everything they want. Whatever they long for; extreme experience of freedom they get in Mexico. As Sal describes the moment of a whore house in Mexico as: "Still we couldn't sober up and didn't want to leave, and ... were still wanted to hang around with our lovely girls in this strange Arabian paradise we had finally found at the end of the hard, hard road" (265). Whatever they search for, at last they get in Mexico City, out of their own country. They get full ecstasy, full freedom in sex, drugs and music in the whore house in Mexico. While dancing with a girl in a whore house, music is quite loud and they realize that they had never dared to play music as loud as they wanted in their country but they get it in Mexico City.

Homosexuality is not open and acceptable in the society of 1950s America. But as beat hero, Dean's sexuality is not limited to women. He is homosexual as well. While driving from San Francisco to Denver, there is the introduction of homosexuality; Dean and the car owner involve themselves into homosexual relationship.

Jazz music is also a holy thing for Sal and Dean. They generally celebrate their nights in different cities with the rhythms of jazz music. Generally, their nights are full with jazz music. They appreciate Jazz musician like Charlie Parker and Slim Gilward as god. They become so much frantic in the beat of jazz music. In San Francisco nightclub, Dean stands in the back, saying Slim Gillard as "God! Yes!"- and clasping his hands in prayers and sweating" (159). In New York also they become frantic with jazz musician George Shearing. When George Shearing was playing piano, Dean becomes so much excited and he puts George in the place of god: "There he is! That's him! Old God! Old God Shearing! Yes! Yes! Yes!" (116).

When the musician rises and fastens the beat of instruments, they become very excited as it seems that they want the same speed and spontaneity in their own lives. As the beat of jazz, they want every moment of their life in movement.

Indulging themselves into sex, jazz, drugs and beers, and numerous road trips, Sal, Dean and some other characters are living a life which is quite horrible and offensive to the people who are living their life with full loyalty to the mainstream society's values. How these beats are living their life is clearly visible in the questions of Carlo Max to them:

Dean, why did you leave Camille? No answer- giggles. 'Marylou, why are you traveling around the country like this and what are your womanly intentions concerning the shroud?' same answer. 'Ed Dunkel, why did you abandon your newly wife in Tucson and what are you doing here sitting on your big fat ass? Where's your home? What's your job?' Ed Dunkel bowed his head in genuine befuddlement. 'Sal, - how comes it you've fallen on such sloppy days and what have you done with Lucille? (117)

Through the simple viewpoint, life of Sal, Dean and some others do not seem to be meaningful. In one and another way, they are fleeing from self and their responsibilities. Nor they have any permanent living address neither they have any specific purpose behind living such lifestyle.

Mainstream society never approves the lifestyle of beats like Sal, Dean, and Ed Dunkel in the novel. Sal's aunt finds Dean a crazy youth so she makes Sal aware of him. Time and again, authorities become suspicious about their lives. Throughout the novel Sal and Dean time and again encounter cops who harass them, try to put them into prison and take their money away. They get critical attack on their lifestyle

but they never pay any attention to such criticism. They live their lives in their own way detaching them from middle class America.

In every aspects, Sal and Dean rebel against mainstream society. They disrupt the value of good job, good settlement, happy marriage and children and secure future which was the life of so many people of central society of their time. They reject such social conformity of their time but never try to reform the society without any system of government. Whatever they do, that is for themselves. From this conversation of Dean and Sal, it can be traced out:

You see, man, you get older and troubles piles up. Someday you and me'll be coming down an alley together at sundown and looking in the cans to see.'

You mean we'll end up old bums?

Why not, man? Of course we will if we want to, and all that. There's no harm ending that way. You spend a whole life of non interference with the wishes of others, including politicians and the rich, and nobody bothers you and you can cut along and make it your own way.

(229)

They do not think to reform the system, and society. They want to live their life in their own way without interferences of others. They are passive rebellions.

In many ways, Sal shares living style of Dean, similar vision towards women and enjoyed his life on road. But there is something different in his vision for life, sex and women. He also values emotion in sex, seeks new experiences and stability through road. He wants women who can understand him. At the end of the novel, it is seen that Sal is going to start his life with a girl named Laura, and Dean is also called by Camille. But it would be very hard for them to assimilate themselves into

the same society and same social values which they are rejecting for long.

Beats: The Continuity of Masculinity and View towards Women

Being a representative work of Beat Generation, Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* presents the views of male beats towards women and gender roles within their culture. They are continuing masculinity as they are practicing the biased gender role, which mainstream society was practicing. They keep sexist view towards women. So, with their sexist view towards women and practice of biased gender roles, male beats are continuing and exercising the masculinity in their culture.

Jack Kerouac's novel *On the Road* portrays how male beats are behaving with women and the value of women in male beats' life. Female readers become disgusted and shocked by representation of the female characters as all the men characters anticipate just sexual pleasure from women. Men characters objectify women as sexual object, portraying themselves as subject. Everywhere in the novel, women are being objectified through male beats' sexist view.

Objectification works in various ways. It can be visualized through the act of gazing at different parts of women's body and describing her as a material. Women also are used as a medium to achieve sexual pleasure. There is vast objectification towards woman throughout the novel. For example, Dean's first wife Marylou is introduced as "his (Dean) beautiful little sharp chick" (3). At this, Marylou is objectified and immediately reduced to an object owned by her husband. Women are comparable to an inanimate object. In the novel, sexual pleasure is prominent to Sal, Dean and his friends. Males like Sal and Dean treat women as replaceable. Particular women are not important for these characters but those female who could provide them enjoyment and sexual pleasure are important for them.

All the active characters are men in the novel. Because of this, the readers

receive very little information about the women's emotion and feelings. The narrator, Sal, generally begins characterization of every woman with a stereotypical exaggeration of her outer appearance. While introducing women in the text, Sal tends to give her a short external description and rarely adds other information about her. While introducing Babe, a friend of Sal in Denver, Sal reveals least information about her than her relation to men: "One of Ray's sisters was a beautiful blonde called Babe – a tennis-playing, surf-riding doll of the west. She was Tim Gray's girl" (42). Here, Babe is simply presented through her outer beauty and her relation with her brother Ray and her boyfriend Tim. There are lots of such examples which prove the sexist view of narrator, or Sal.

Sal's objectification of women can be found frequently in the novel. He introduces near about every women with their physical appearance or describing some parts of her body or her relation to the males. At first meeting with Marylou, Sal describes her from outer appearance as she is "...a pretty blonde with immense ringlets of hair like a sea of golden tresses; she set there on the edge of the couch with her hands hanging in her lap and her smoky blue country eyes fixed in wide stare" (4). Here, Sal describes Marylou's body parts hair and eyes and connects them with some objects. And again, he adds, "But, outside of being a sweet little girl, she was awfully dumb and capable of doing horrible things" (4). At first meeting, Sal judges Marylou's personality as she is a dangerous girl who can do tough things. Sal puts her into the category of bad girls without concerning about her actual personality. When Sal first meets Dean's second wife Camille, he describes her as "brunette on the bed, one beautiful creamy thigh covered with black lace, look up with mild wonder" (39). Here also, Sal looks Camille's body and uses the term 'creamy' for the part of her body. It shows Sal's sexist view towards women.

In the similar way, Sal describes Dean's third wife Inez only on the basis of her physical appearance: "a big sexy brunette ... and generally like a Parisian coquette" (232). Here, we have an example of a woman who is reduced to a body as she has no brain, emotions and feelings, and her color and ethnical origin is sufficient to describe her.

When Sal observes his own girlfriends with this sexist view, it is obvious to assume that objectifying women is strongly rooted in sexist territory of beat generation. Terry, his Mexican girlfriend, becomes the victim of his objectification. When he sees her in a bus station he describes her as:

I had bought my ticket and was waiting for the LA bus when all of a sudden I saw the cutest little Mexican girl in slacks comes cutting across my sight. She was in one of the buses that had just pulled in with a big sigh of airbrakes; it was discharging passengers for a rest stop. Her breasts stuck out straight and true; her little flanks looked delicious; her hair was long and lustrous black; and her eyes were great big blue with timidities inside. (73)

Here, we find a description of a woman from a male's point of view who is just focusing on particular distinguishing parts of the female body as breasts, flanks, hair and eyes. Moreover, description of her breast as "straight and true" is clear that she looks the same as a woman is expected by the beat generation's people.

Likewise, his second girlfriend Lucille is introduced in the text as "a beautiful Italian honey-haired darling" (105), and nothing more than that. Sal does not provide detailed description of Terry and Lucille about their internal qualities as long as their bodies are pleaserous to look. It looks as though that their physical appearance and sexual charisma is sufficient to male.

The road trips of Sal and Dean's in *On the Road* is also arguable in the search of actual and authentic experience of pleasure. And for this pleasure, women are one of the prominent sources as they seek sexual pleasure everywhere throughout their travel. They get that pleasure by involving themselves into sexual activity with women or just gazing every woman they meet with their sexist view.

In the novel there are several examples of sexist behavior of Sal and Dean along with their road trips. In their Chicago visit, without experiencing sightseeing or other beauty of the city, they search for girls around the city. While entering a bar Dean exclaims: "What a weird town – wow, and that woman in that window up there, just looking down with her big breasts hanging from her nightgown, big wide eyes" (225). By talking or looking at the body parts like breast, eyes of women, is his masculine perspective towards women.

While Dean and Sal have to return a borrowed car in very bad situation, they have some discuss with car owners and there is legal problem. But Dean is not at all interested in the legal matters. He only stares at the owner's wife as Sal describes: "The upshot of it was an exchange of addresses and some talk, and Dean not taking his eyes off the man's wife whose beautiful brown breasts were barely concealed inside a floppy cotton blouse" (214). Without concerning about the legal matters, Dean, here just look at the man's wife with his sexist view. He never misses a chance to gaze at women with his sexist view.

So, everywhere in the novel, women have become the victim of male objectification. Male beats just search for sexual pleasure from women. Though these beats break many rules of mainstream society, they are unable to break the tradition of sexist view towards women. Taking women as a commodity to fulfill sexual pleasure beats want strong continuity of masculinity.

Beats and Gender Role in the Novel

For the modern readers, the sexual issue of Jack Kerouac's novel *On the Road* is not very offensive and surprising. But at the same time, if they divert their concern towards the issue of gender, obviously they get shocked as there is the vast difference between the sexes. The novel clearly portrays the role given to men and women which is supposed to perform by men and women in beat culture. Men have taken outer world and decision making sphere whereas women have got peripheral and domestic world throughout the novel. This demarcation of roles according to sex is even worse to the division of gender role in mainstream society.

There is a division of labour according to sex in the novel which implies that the household duties are supposed to be handled by women and men spare more time for their enjoyment. One example of this is when Sal visits a ranching family and the husband is free to relax and enjoy himself while his wife prepares plenty of excellent dishes. All women get the peripheral place in the novel. They are marginalized, often reduced to valueless housewives. When Sal goes to Denver and stays at his friend Chad King's house, he says: "My first afternoon in Denver I slept in Chad King's room while his mother went on with her housework downstairs and Chad worked at the library" (40). Chad's mother is handling the work of kitchen whereas Chad is doing his own business being at library. It shows that intellectual world also belongs to men.

The division of labour according to sex is clearly seen from the very beginning of the novel. There is another example of division of labor according to sex when Sal describes his first meeting with Dean as:

I went to the cold water flat with boys, and Dean comes to the door at his shorts. Marylou was jumping of the coach; Dean had dispatched

the occupant to the kitchen, probably to make coffee, while he proceeded with his love problems for to him sex is one and only holy and important thing in life, although he had to sweat and curse to make a living and so on. (4)

Division of labor is clearly reflected here as Dean sends Marylou to kitchen for preparing coffee while he himself stays with his friends. Here, Dean's attitude towards women is clearly visible as he describes sex is just one thing that he wants in life. It shows that he does not have any emotional attachment to Marylou. She is there just to satisfy his sexual demand.

Marylou is representative female beat in the novel. She lives the lifestyle as the male beats. She shares the lifestyle of male beats by drinking alcohol, smoking and going to road trips with them. But still, male beats are biased to her. Male beats' biasness to her can be seen here:

That night we all drank beer and pulled wrists and talked till down, and in the morning, while we set 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. (4)

Here, Dean, a representative beat male divides the role for women; Marylou. He decides that Marylou has to make breakfast and sweep the floor. It clearly shows the beats' inability to redefine the gender roles.

For these beats, wife or women should be submissive and obedient. She should not complain about the way of living of her husband. Dean talks to Sal about Inez, his third wife as she is perfect woman who obeys him. He says: "Inez loves me. She told me and promised me I can do anything I want and there'll be a minimum

trouble” (228). Dean loves Inez because she had promised him that she will not make any complains and will not create any obstacle in Dean’s way of life. But sometime after he leaves Inez with her newly born baby as she needs money and starts to complain his way of living.

Sal once says: “I saw myself in Middle America, a patriarch” (163). And obviously, patriarchy provides the power to exercise the masculinity over female and these beats are doing the same thing. For them, the definition of a good wife is like this: “Never a harsh word, never a complaint, or modified; her old man can come in any hour of the night with anybody and have talks in the kitchen and drink the beer and leave any old time. This is a man and that’s his castle” (185). Woman or wife should be submissive. She should obey her husband and should accept whatever her husband does. She should not raise her voice against husband’s activity and let him to do whatever he wants. This is a type of arrogant nature of the male in beat culture.

The behavior of Dean and Ed Dunkel towards Galatea clearly portrays the feeling of male beats towards women. These beats can leave any women anywhere as women are defaulted the role of sexual partner and submissive to them. Dean and Ed Dunkel want to take a girl named Galatea with them in the trip for sexual pleasure. But Galatea proposes Ed Dunkel to marry her first. He marries her and takes her to the trip to east. But when Galatea feels tired and complains about their trips, “Dean and Ed gave her a slip in a hotel lobby and resumed the voyages alone, with the sailor, and qualm” (101). This is the extremity of beats emotional detachment from women. Dean also leaves Camille helplessly with a baby and in the period when her next baby was being born and she was in sort of money. He repeats the same behavior to Inez by leaving her in very hard situation with her newly born baby.

As a whole, Jack Kerouac’s *On the Road* presents quite pathetic condition of

women who are in relationship with male beats. Not single women are happy in their relationship with male beats. Male beats betray their girlfriend or wife and leave them in middle of the very hard circumstances. This behavior of male affects women physically and mentally. In a phone call to Sal, Old Bull Lee describes the condition of Galatea as: “She has been here two weeks now, hiding in her room and refusing to talk to either Jane or me” (120). Galatea has been shattered by the treatment of Ed Dunkel and she is not talking to anyone. She has been suffering from mental torture. Camille is also facing same condition. Sal describes Camille in his last visit of Denver: “Camille came from work at the doctor’s office and gave us all the sad look of harassed women’s life. I tried to show this haunted women In the morning there was terrible scene: she lay on bed sobbing” (170). Camille looks very upset and harassed with life. She is working at the difficult period of pregnancy and at the same time she has to take care of her baby. Camille is suffering mentally and physically from the behavior of Dean as he is leaving her when she needs Dean most.

So, as a whole, the condition of women is quite pathetic in beat culture. Women in mainstream culture of 1950s had no option except being a mother or housewife. But they were not in mental, physical and economic crisis like Marylou, Camille, Inez or Galatea. Though men were not the part of household activities, they had accepted and internalized their responsibility towards their wife and children. But in beat culture, Male beats always search their freedom leaving their women in do or die situation. Forgetting their responsibility, male beats leave their women to suffer mentally, physically and economically. Women have suffered most because of the self-reliance and self-decision of male beats. They are the prominent victims of male beats’ exercise of masculinity.

CHAPTER FOUR

Beats, Masculinity and Women in *On the Road*

On the Road, the representative work of Beat Generation, in many ways is a picture of the life of beats that emerged after the World War II in America. The male beats, in many ways, detached themselves from mainstream culture of that time and created a subculture which became the milestone and seed for greater Cultural Revolution of 1960s and 1970s America known as Hippie Movement.

Beats revolted against the mainstream society of Post-World War II America. Their lifestyle is routed against the blooming capitalism, materialism and consumerism of their country. They freed themselves from pre-packaged lifestyle of their parents and broke the various traditions of mainstream American society and lived their life in own way.

Beats' culture also known as Beat Generation was an urban post-war bohemian subculture that consisted of young intellectuals that opposed mainstream society and rejected values like the nuclear family and the oppressed sexuality. They indulged their life into liberal sexual practices, experimentation of different drugs, and celebrated the beat of jazz music. In the novel, Dean, Sal, Carlo, Remi, Ed Dunkel and some other characters are unquestionably the beat personalities. But among these personalities, Dean and Sal truly and fully represent the lives of beats. Their lifestyle is quite questionable and horrible for the people of mainstream culture. They search for meaning, satisfaction, happiness through road trips and unstable life instead of stable life with marriage, home, children and work and secure future.

Beat characters in the novel are hipsters who celebrate the beat of jazz music. They are quite similar to the generation after the First World War by seeing loss in humanity in their country resulted from the wars but they vary from previous as they

gave much emphasis on spirituality. They lived their life in their own way but never advocated for change in any system of society which makes them different from Hippies.

The beat culture in the novel is built on the patriarchal values of mainstream society whereas women are placed in inferior position. Women are continuously marginalized, oppressed and treated as commodity. Women are fulfilling the role of housewives, caregiver, and sexual partners who do not have any influence on men's way of living. Throughout the novel, most of the women remain inside the house preparing meals, washing and sewing. They are bound to domestic life. On the other hand, men have no restrictions and can do whatever they want.

In the novel, male beats disrupt and challenge the various social and cultural tradition of society of their time. But, they fail to disrupt the traditional gender roles and sexist view towards women. They give continuation to the masculinity as they practice the negative and sexist view towards women. And again, their practice of masculinity can be seen in their practice of biased gender roles. In America after Second World War, women were expected to be housewives, caregiver to her children, handle household activities and fulfill the sexual needs of her husband. So, beats in the novel cannot disrupt the traditional view towards the women and cannot uplift women from the periphery of the domestic world. They fail to treat women as equal to them.

It is evident that Sal and his friends form a masculine 'homosocial' group, that is a group based on male friendship, 'male bonding,' without the influence of women. Masculine activities like drinking, driving cars and listening to jazz are connected with male beats. Women, for this circle of males in the novel, are presented as commodity that can be used, thrown and replaced. They are reduced to sexual objects,

whereas male are active subjects who enjoy the pleasure in gazing women. Most of the women presented in the novel are victims of male beat's sexiest view. Marylou, a representative female beat, is also the victim of male's objectification and exercise of masculinity. The male beats' regular search for kicks automatically presents the females as material of male desire.

While looking at the situation of the women in the novel, it is found that they are dominated by male figures every time. Everywhere they are suppressed, oppressed, marginalized and stereotyped. They have to accept the superiority of men and accept their decisions. If they do not obey or accept the decisions of males, these male can leave their women anytime and anywhere. For evidence, Ed and Dean leave their wives when they start to complain and oppose on their way of living.

Most of the women are tormented and betrayed by the male beats. They are very depressed and mentally shattered. Women in the novel either live in restricting relationships, or have to oppose the inequalities of society when they attempt to support their children alone. Male characters always leave their women in very hard situation without thinking their hardships.

Though Beat movement was a radical breakthrough in America, still it was the continuity of masculinity in its nature. Beats in the novel unquestionably continue the practices of masculinity by placing women in equal to a market material that is used to fulfill their sexual need. The demarcation of gender role is even worse in comparison with mainstream American society. Men placed women inside the domestic world, whereas they placed themselves into the outside world. With such behavior beats give continuity to masculinity in their culture.

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