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**Rebellion in Post-WW II American**  
**Literature Case of Study: Jack Kerouac's**  
***On the Road*(1957)**

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Foreign Languages in Partial Fulfillment for the  
Master's Degree in Literature and Civilization

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## **Dedication**

I dedicate my humble effort to:

My sweet and loving parents whose affection, love, encouragement and prayers make me able to get such success, my father for his care and motivation, my exceptional mother for her unconditional love.

The praiseworthy professor Mr. Slimania Nacer, who has been a constant source of knowledge and inspiration,

My adoring brother Walid and, his sweet wife Yada, and my outstanding brother Chiheb

My charming sister Imene, and my beautiful aunt Khadoudj,

My delightful nieces Hadile and Sidra,

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## Abstract

This study aims to analyze the theme of rebellion in the American literary fifties in Jack Kerouac's novel *On the Road*. After the Second World War the United States witnessed a huge economic progress. The country also turned to isolationism as a result of the 'red scare' and immigration. In this dissertation an attempt will be made to discuss the theme of rebellion in the novel through textual analysis study. The novel is a reflection of rebellious youth against a conformist society. This research examines; the strength of a classic road-trip novel in creating a wide literary movement which is named as the Beat Generation or the Beat Movement. Kerouac's rebellious behavior is portrayed in the course of the characters' experience on the road next to the unique literary style of the novel. In relation to his inner psychology, he demonstrates the importance of finding an escape from normal life to a mobile adventure around the country in the company of jazz music, drugs and sexual experiences. The main characters represent the desire to discover a spiritual meaning of life beyond a respectable middle-class way of life. With his obsession of spontaneity; Kerouac in *On the Road* is trying to create his own voice, and style of writing to guide his generation into a counterculture mentality against the American society standards of the 1950s.

**Keywords:** Rebellion, Beat Generation, Mobile, Spontaneity.

## Résumé

Cette étude vise à analyser le thème de la rébellion dans la littérature américaine des années cinquante dans le roman de Jack Kerouac *Sur la Route*. Après la Seconde Guerre Mondiale, les Etats-Unis ont connu un énorme progrès économique. Le pays s'est également tourné vers l'isolationnisme en raison de la 'peur rouge' et de l'immigration. Dans cette thèse, on tentera d'aborder le thème de la rébellion dans les romans étudiés à travers une analyse textuelle. Le roman est le reflet d'une jeunesse rebelle contre un âge de conformisme en Amérique. Cette recherche examine; la force d'un roman de road-trip classique dans la création d'un large mouvement littéraire appelé Beat Génération ou Beat Mouvement. Le comportement rebelle de Kerouac est dépeint au cours de l'expérience des personnages sur la route à côté du style littéraire unique du roman. En relation avec sa psychologie intérieure, il démontre l'importance de trouver une échappatoire à la vie normale pour une aventure mobile à travers le pays en compagnie de musique jazz, de drogues et d'expériences sexuelles. Les personnages principaux représentent le désir de découvrir un sens spirituel de la vie au-delà d'un mode de vie respectable de la classe moyenne. Avec son obsession de la spontanéité ; Kerouac dans *Sur la Route* essaie de créer sa propre voix et son propre style d'écriture pour guider sa génération dans une mentalité de contre-culture contre les normes de la société américaine des années 1950.

**Mots-clés :** Rébellion, Beat Génération, Mobile. Spontanéité.

## المخلص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل موضوع التمرد في الأدب الأمريكي في الخمسينيات من القرن الماضي في رواية جاك كيرواك على الطريق. بعد الحرب العالمية الثانية ، شهدت الولايات المتحدة توترًا اقتصاديًا هائلاً. كما تحولت البلاد إلى النعزلة بسبب "الخوف الأحمر" والهجرة. سنحاول في هذه الأطروحة تناول موضوع التمرد في الروايات المدروسة من خلال تحليل نصي. الرواية هي انعكاس لشباب متمرّد ضد عصر الانصياع في أمريكا. يفتحص هذا البحث؛ قوة رواية رحلة الطريق الكالسيفيكية في خلق حركة أدبية واسعة تسمى بحزب أو حركة بيت. يتم تصوير سلوك كيريواك المتمرد في سياق تجربة الشخصيات على الطريق بجوار أسلوب الأدبي الفريد للرواية. نبيما يفتحق بعلم النفس الداخلي لديّه ، يوضح أهمية إيجاد هروب من الحياة الطبيعية إلى مغامرة مننزالة في جميع أنحاء البلاد بصحبة موسيقى الجاز والمخدرات والتجارب الجنسية. تمثل الشخصيات الرئيسية الرغبة في اكتشاف المعنى الروحي للحياة يتجاوز أسلوب حياة الطبقة الوسطى المحترّم. مع هوسه بالعنفية. يحاول كيرواك في على الطريق إنشاء صوته الخاص وأسلوبه في الكتابة لتوجيه جيله إلى عقلية الثفائة المضادة ضد معايير المجتمع الأمريكي في الخمسينيات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تمرد ، حزب بيت ، النزول ، عنوية.

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## General Introduction

The American society witnessed an existence of certain cultural values as a result of the war experience. The Post-traumatic state of people affected the sense of belonging to their society; as they suffer from different psychological problems, and no longer feel the pleasure of life. Concerning literature, writers focused on the leftovers of the Second World War, and its impact on people's lives. However; the American literature of the fifties brought a cultural and a literary shift, which it differs from the past writings in numerous aspects. Jack Kerouac is among the writers who challenged the Post- WWII era, by his novel *On the Road*; he rebelled against the traditional social and literary standards based on his own life experience. Kerouac view life, time, society, music, and literature, in a different perspective in which he settle on involving new themes and norms to the American society and the American literature.

The American fifties gained its reputation as the age of political, cultural and social conformity. By the end of the Korean War, a sense of conservatism is portrayed among American people, this shift of political views led to conformity in the American political identity. During this last political period, an accusation of communism traced the American society, but the fear of this claim led to the creation of typical America in which people tried to be as American as possible, that caused a cultural change; as people are expected to follow restricted social norms to achieve the American Dream of a bourgeois life. The issue with this concept of imposed standard middle-class life is that not every individual can live up to the expectations of society's norms (cf. Williams 162).

However, some American writers rejected conformity and the middle-class social values of the fifties, this rejection created the Beat movement. The members of the Beat movements share rebelled standards; focusing on individual freedom, experimentation, and sexual liberty, standing in front of the people's expectation by inventing once own ideals and beliefs.

Jack Kerouac in *On the Road* stands against the conventional life of the fifties, his novel *On the Road* is defined as a symbolic reference to the American society era of conformism. *On the Road* is the face of the Beat Generation and the voice of a new literary movement.

This research aims to focus on Post-WWII era of American history. It concentrates on the post-World War II American writers' use of the concept of revolt, with a particular focus on Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*. In Kerouac's novel, the protagonist stands against his society to show his rejected spirit. We will try to focus on character is depicted in literature. Different aspects of Jack Kerouac's nonconformist mindset are carried throughout the entire book.

The most important questions of this study can be: how does Kerouac shaped his insurgence through hid novel *On the Road* ? what is the impact of changes that occurred in the 1950s American society and conformity in the development of Kerouac's rebellious literary movement? How did *On the Road* became the leading work behind a rebellious literary movement? And finally how is Kerouac's rebellion portrayed through its themes and literary style?

We examine literary works in order to present the issue of rebellion in American literature in the 1950s in order to address the study questions. The latter is pervasive in American literature and history that explored to reflect.

The goal of this study is to focus on the issue of American people' post-World War II as it is depicted in contemporaneous literary works. In this work, we want to how group of Americans wanted to follow the same norms, but not everyone shared this desire. Because the American 1950s are so very different from the widely held and well-known clichés.

The subject of resistance in American literature during the 1950s has been the subject of numerous works from a variety of angles. However, this study approaches the same subject by concentrating on how the characters' rebellion is portrayed.

The material used to study resistance during the Post- WWII is the novel of Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*. As a methodology, we use the theory of New-Historicism and psychoanalysis. The methodology used then depends on qualitative approach based both data collection and data analysis.

My work is divided into four chapters. The first chapter deals with theoretical background of both theories new historicism and Freud's psychoanalytic theory in analyzing youth rebellion, along with Erik Erikson's psychosocial development theory and the notion of identity crisis in psychology. The second chapter portrays the historical background of American literary fifties, dealing with the affluent lifestyle and the era of conformity in American Post Second World War, that resulted in the establishment of a new literary movement of rebellious youth what is known as the Beat Generation. In Chapter three a thematic representation of the issues of rebellion and resistance will be discussed through the portrayal of the characters' behavior, while examining the way Kerouac reflects his rebellious ideas into the lifestyle that the characters' choose to live. The fourth chapter is concerned with the writer's rebellion through his literary style and his language and how he created his own literary stylistic techniques and methods using jazz culture.

## **Chapter One: New- Historicism and Psychoanalysis: A Theoretical**

### **Background**

#### **Introduction**

Over time, literary texts have been the center of attention and analysis from the majority of scholars in order to understand what happened during a particular time frame. Many critics analyze the literary work, using different and appropriate theories. Among the important theories new historicism and psychoanalytic approaches, both approaches are developed over years by multiple scholars.

This introductory chapter is going to introduce an overview of new historicism and psychoanalysis. We will focus on the major key assumptions of new historicism along with its important features in analyzing the literary texts. Additionally, we shall try to amplify an overview of the psychoanalytic theory, in which we are going to demonstrate; Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, as well as Erik Erikson's notion of identity crisis in his psychoanalytic theory.

#### **1.1 An Overview of New-Historicism Theory**

New Historicism theory was first introduced into the American literary scholarship in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century; Matt Hickling in his thesis states that John Brannigan considers the case of the theory as not new as it appears to be, confirming that Herodotus might be the first New Historicist which contradicts to the old New Historicists categorization. For Paul Cantor, the concept of New Historicism is mainly connecting anything with anything. The theory emerged in the 1980s as a reaction toward the historical approach of the New Historicism, which is transferred from the Historicism theory into a method in the study of history and

literature. It is a new strategy that is defined on the Oxford Dictionary as a form of cultural analysis which examines how a cultural product interacts with and participates in its historical context.

The New-Historicist Stephan Greenblatt, along with J.W Lever, Jonathan Dollimore, and Harold .Aram Veesper supported the detachment of New Historicism from Historicism. They also believe that disconnecting historical events from reality leads to an emotional vacant, “What New Historicism does is engage in the emphasis on power relations operating within the society of its time. That is, New Historicism consciously engages the idea that we inevitably read the past from the present” (Hickling54). Those scholars describe New Historicism by a parallel reading of a literary or non-literary text with its socio-cultural and historical condition. Hickling illustrates that one of Stephen Greenblatt’s main arguments, in the development of New-Historicism theory, is the existence of a real social world that is produced and reformed by the wordings it creates.

New Historicism focuses on a history that is written from an ordinary people’s perspective, “Ultimately, the shift from historicism to New Historicism emphasizes the relation between events and emotional response and informs the notion that such events are never to be considered neutral” (55). New Historicism concentrates on the emotional influence with any historical events, “New Historicists emphasize the notion that historical values change over time, whereas historicists prioritize the immutable and unchangeable notion of historical facts”(56). New Historicism contradict to the perception that history is a series of events that have a causal relationship, and the concern of the New Historicists was the role of historical context in interpreting literary texts “ the key concern of New Historicists was the historic of texts and textuality of history”( Rizkey13).

### 1.1.1 The Key Concepts of New Historicism

New Historicism theory gained its recognition as an approach in literary criticism in the 1990s, the Harvard English professor and critic Stephen Greenblatt, was the first scholar who coined name of the theory along with its formal framework. The theory of new historicism has its own features and concepts that marked its differences from the traditional historical theory. Scholars coined the first chief key concept in new historicism which is the influence of historical events and the culture in people's point of view, where they remain subjective interpreters in the events around them in their life. The scholar Lois Tyson in his book *Critical Theory Today* (2015) states that "The writing of history is a matter of interpretations, not facts. Thus, all historical accounts are narratives and can be analyzed using many of the tools used by literary critics to analyze narrative"(290). Marszalski in his thesis *New-historical analysis of Jack Kerouac's literary legacy* (2018), mentions that scholars recognize that the reader considers that a literary work in new historicism theory is influenced by its author's circumstances whether in historical and cultural events that he/her lived in, or by the author's personal opinions (16).

New historicism came in opposition to the traditional historical approach that follows the perception of as history is a series of events that have a linear causal relationship, however, new historicism believe in history as a concept, and as a result of relations between discourse and social relation of a certain period of time. New historicism analyzed how events are interpreted, instead of focusing on the events themselves, this divergence forms an important key concept in new historicism. Additionally, Tyson refers to another important key concept which is the issue of power relations that are a result of social discourse of the time, in Tyson's words:

Power is never wholly confined to a single person or a single level of society. Rather, power circulates in a culture through exchanges of

material goods, exchanges of human beings, and, most important for literary critics, exchanges of ideas through the various discourses a culture produces (290).

The quote expresses Tyson's concept about the way power can influence the author and his work.

New historicists do not try to outline a permanent interpretation, in the same manner they do not try to understand every aspect of a particular culture. Hence, in critical analysis they focus only on reflecting a specific image of a culture. Furthermore, one of the principal key assumptions in new historicism is the issue of the subjective perspective of the critic, in the meaning that critics have to put in consideration the influence of their own cultural backgrounds, as well as their views on reading and analysis of a literary text. The critic Harold Aram Veesser argues in his book *The New Historicism* that "every act of unmasking, critique, and opposition uses the tools it condemns and risks falling prey to the practice it exposes" (qtd in Marszalski 18), he points that critics are obliged to consider in any literary text analysis is an interpretation of facts only, not an understanding of them.

### **1.1.2 The Process of Analysis in New Historicism**

After recognizing the distinctive assumptions in new historicism theory from its traditional understanding. Scholars obtained a new direction in interpreting literary text; starting from eliminating the belief that literary text is a subjective product of historical facts, correspondingly, they rejected the idea that a text is self-sufficient outside its historical background. The principle of 'text is historical and history is textual' coined by the literary scholar Michael Warner, examines the fact that meaning for new historicists does not exceed context, however, it is produced within the context itself. Moreover Warner convey that

human actions and relations are not distinguished from language, hence, culture in new historicism is perceived as a non-literary text that can be analyzed by the same mechanism used in analyzing a literary text.

The role of literature in the traditional historical approach is considered as a product of historical events, while new historicism approach regards literature's role in the creation of history and culture, Tyson Lois in *Critical Theory Today*, supports this claim saying that:

For new historicism, the literary text and the historical situation from which it emerged are equally important because text (the literary work) and context (the historical conditions that produced it) are mutually constitutive: they create each other. Like the dynamic interplay between individual identity and society, literary texts shape and are shaped by their historical contexts (292).

Therefore the difference between the two approaches can be acknowledged.

Understanding the relationship between literature and context is a basis feature for identifying the process of analyzing using the new historical approach; therefore, the differences between the traditional historical approach and new historicism approach created a divergence within critics when interpreting a literary text. New historicism considers the time in which the title is produced, and published along with the period of its interpretation by the critic. There are multiple aspects to consider when analyzing in new historicism approach. First, the critic has to follow the historical and cultural connection between the analyzed text and other texts. The second important aspect is related to the critics themselves in which the analyzer of a literary text, needs to be able to describe the differences in the reception of the text in relation to the time of publication, not only the time of publishing the text, but also the time of publishing the text in the critics' time. Moreover, the critics should pay attention to the circumstances that could have an impact on the responses, besides critics

have to consider following the trace of words and expressions that their meaning is changed or no more used over time.

## **1.2 An Overview of Psychoanalysis Theory**

In early twentieth century, Sigmund Freud established a self-description concept in his book *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), which resulted to the creation of psychoanalysis approach. Freud suggested that human mind consists of dimensions that are reachable to once consciousness. Moreover, the concept of unconscious for Freud is a collection of repressed desires, feelings, memories, and drives that have a relation with sexuality and violence. In his books and studies ; *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, "A Case of Infantile Neurosis," *Three Essays on Sexuality*, *The Ego and the Id*, and *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, Freud states that human's mental lives are derived from biological drives, he explains how a child in his growth period go through his family first, than enters into his society. The child than learns the way to express his derives and consciousness, as well as, the child begins to conduct a sense of self as a response to his life demands within family and society.

Concerning personality, Erik Erikson believed that Sigmund Freud in his psychoanalytic theory concentrated on only childhood events, in which he later developed a life span theory as an expansion of Freud's psychoanalysis theory. Erikson's theory is called the psychosocial development theory where he depends on the different stages and events of human's life whether in childhood or any other stage of life. Furthermore, Erikson, created the concept of identity crisis as an important dimension in his psychosocial development theory, he saw that the problem of identity took a major part in the life of most people, where they feel they lost their identity or no longer fell their identity, as it plays a central role over human's life in all stages whether in childhood or in any other age. Both Sigmund Freud and

Erik Erikson introduces psychoanalysis theory in every aspect of once life in order to understand and analyze once psyche and how it influences the life of humans.

### 1.2.1 Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory

Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan in their book *Literary Theory and Anthology* 'Strangers to Ourselves: Psychoanalysis', suggested that Freud in his studies that the analysis behind people's experiences of doubleness what Freud called it as "uncanny". The last concept is referred as the sense of a strange something that coexist with familiar things inside once self. In addition, he explains the reason behind human's repetitions of certain gestures or experiences as an unavoidable act that human have no control over it, because those repetitions are consequential by forces within ourselves since they occur from a place we do not control (389). Unconscious is developed by Freud's study of patients in order to analyze the conflicts that exist between unconscious and conscious feelings; these patients are described by having neurotic symptoms, since they are engaged in different behaviors.

The repetition of patients explains their status inside something outside their awareness or control Freud's study of contribution progressed modern psychology, in the sense that the unconscious proves to be an important part of human's behavior. He illustrated that any human is derived by two contradictory desires, which are named in his study as 'Eros' and 'Thanatos'. 'Eros' is the personification of both survival and sexual desires. While 'Thanatos' represents the support for death and the state of relief. Also, Freud suggests in his studies that a conflict between conscious and unconscious is a result of the censored needs of human (390).

Rivkin and Ryan stated that Freud's major interest his entire life was devoted to studying and understanding the boundary movement between conscious which is referred to by 'ego', and unconscious that named by Freud as 'Id', both scholars Rivkin and Ryan states

that the concept of conscious or Id as “The id is the site of the energy of the mind, energy that Freud characterized as a combination of sexual libido and other instincts, such as aggression, that propel the human organism through life, moving it to grow, develop, and eventually to die” (391). For Freud, ‘Id’ is the primary process of life, in the sense that it is an irrational process, and can not distinguish between logic and unconscious image of objects.

Moreover, ‘ego’ is illustrated by Freud as the intermediary between the consciousness of human and the external world. He states that ‘ego’ or unconscious is a present reason for human mind, in addition to his belief that ‘ego’ when it is uncontrolled; can possibly become destructive realm as a result of various biological derives. In this context, Freud clarifies that when conscious controls desires and unconscious derives results to a human statues of psychosis or what is called as schizophrenia.

### **1.2.2 Erik Erikson and Identity Crisis**

The psychosocial development theory is introduced by the psychologist Erik Erikson as an expansion of Freud’s psychoanalytic theory. Kate C. Mclean in *Erikson’s Theory of Psychosocial Development* along with Moin Syed, stated that Erikson studied with Anna Freud and was well influenced by Freud, yet he considered that Freud’s theory was limited only to early childhood events, “Erikson developed a lifespan theory; that is, he theorized about the nature of personality development as it unfolds from birth through old age” (2), he depended than in his theory not only on childhood events but also on adulthood and old age events, Erikson than developed a lifespan theory where social influence contribute in the personality and the human development of any individual, “Erikson’s theory is considered psychosocial, emphasizing the importance of social and cultural factors across the lifespan” (Mclean and Syed 2).

Freud's theory was the first influence to Erikson's theory. Although he contradicted Freud's psychosexual theory, his psychosocial theory however pact a major part for immature sexuality, in Mclean and Syed words:

Despite Erikson's departure from the sexual primacy of Freud's theorizing, Erikson's theory is undoubtedly a psychoanalytic theory strongly influenced by Freud. Yet, although social tensions are highlighted above sexual tensions, Erikson' theory still accords a prominent role for infantile sexuality, lifelong libidinal drives, and the unconscious" (2).

The psychosocial development theory consists of eight crucial tensions that need to exist in the lifespan of every individual. The tensions are often described by Erikson as stages, these last can be thought as a developmental task that any person must confront for the accomplishment of proper development, "Thinking of the eight tensions as developmental tasks helps us understand the psychological issues that are particularly salient to individuals at different points in their lives" (2).

Erikson in his theory build the eight stages giving identifying every tension in a exact phase from infant till old-aged individuals; Trust vs. Mistrust (infancy) stage; in when infant develop a sense of trust when their needs are achieved, Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt (toddlerhood) stage ; depends on toddler's learning of independence and self confidence, Initiative vs. Guilt (early childhood) stage; is when the preschooler learns to handle self-control, Industry vs. Inferiority (middle childhood) stage; describe the phase when children begin to feel effective or insufficient, Identity vs. Role Confusion (adolescence and emerging adulthood); is a stage where a sense of by testing roles is developed within teenagers to form a single identity, Intimacy vs. Isolation (emerging adulthood and adulthood) stage; illustrate the struggle of young adults in forming a close relationships along with gaining a capacity for

love, Generativity vs. Stagnation (adulthood); is a stage that is based on middle-aged persons that search for developing a sense of contribution to the world, and the final stage is Integrity vs. Despair (old age) that is related to the elderly person's experience in life and his sense of success or failure about his life.

Since Erikson's theory is a lifespan theory, an important aspect within the stages of psychosocial development is; understanding the role of age in the theory as well as constructing a specific ages to every stage, which was a difficult task in the theory due to differences at an individual level for each person, Mclean and Syed narrate that "there is often a desire to assign specific age ranges to each of the tensions. However, this is not possible. There are no hard and fast ages at which each tension rises to prominence and falls to the background" (3).

One of Erikson's main concepts in the development theory is the notion of identity crisis. The American scholar Kendra Cherry in her article *What Is an Identity Crisis*, explains the meaning of the identity crisis and the reason behind Erikson's illustration of the notion in his psychosocial development theory, saying that Erikson believed in the importance of building an identity which is a problem that most of people tackle in their life, Erikson held the concept of identity as a basic part in different stages in once life, refusing its relation to the teenage and adolescence years only, since people come across various challenging experiences in their full life in Cherry's words "Erikson did not believe that the formation and growth of identity were confined to adolescence only. Instead, identity is something that shifts and changes throughout life as people confront new challenges and tackle different experiences (2).

**Conclusion**

Literature is directly related to different literary approaches when reading or analyzing a work of literature; therefore, scholars and new historicists developed the new historicism approach in literary criticism which they formed its new analytical features by detaching it from the traditional historical approach in different point of analysis and readings, starting from creating new key concepts of the theory as well as, building new processes of analysis to advocate the new historicism approach as a reliable approach in literary criticism. On the other hand, psychoanalysis theory is developed by Sigmund Freud from his studies of human behavior, and the way it is related to consciousness and unconsciousness, yet Erik Erikson came to expand Freud's psychoanalysis theory, by developing a lifespan theory which is the psychosocial development theory where he focuses on all stages of human's life, and more importantly on the problem of identity in people's life.

## **Chapter Two: A Historical Background of the 1950s American Literature**

### **Introduction**

Literature over time is apparent as the figure of not only the cultural perspective, but also the historical legacy of a whole country. American literature passed through unusual historical stages that made it a unique literature with its writers and its writings. The late twentieth century production came to transmit the consistent of Post-WWII repercussion, into facing the prejudice status of the dominant politics and culture of USA over individuals.

This chapter provides an overview of the historical background of American Literary Fifties; it consists of two main dimensions. The first part portrays the American social and cultural structures of the 1950s and the atmosphere of the 1950s beside the effect of conformity and nonconformity on people's standards of life. The second illustrates the Post WWII American literature, describing the characters of the 1950s writers and the emergence of the Beat Generation as a rebellious movement in America.

### **2.1 The American Social and Cultural Structures of the 1950s**

During Post- WWII, America boarded a new epoch of its history. The 1950's domination was incorporated by strong changes in American life. The latter has approached every domain, from politics and economy, to society and culture. Many Americans described the 1950s as a golden era and a time of affluence.

The period marked the establishment of remarkable economic growth and the birth of an industrial superpower. Citizens were satisfied with their lives, seeking for no more than a home ownership and a decent job. Yet, the decade was subjected to different events that disturbed the life of the American people; including the Cold War, the fear of communism, in which America entered what was named a decade of fear, Anthony A Harkins in his book the

*Comics Stipped* mentions “Yet as Douglas Miller and Marion Nowak, Elaine Tyler May , and numerous other historians have shown the 1950s were “ more an era of *fear* than fun” ( 101).

During the Cold War, the fear of communism arose step by step inside American life and lasted till the 1960s. The political conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union increased the concerns of the Americans about the spread of communism within America which threaten the security of the country (Brinkley1). This dread drove some political administrators on imposing various programs and activities during what was known as the period of anticommunism hysteria that is known as the Red Scare, an example of the president Harry S. Truman who forced the Executive Order on March 21.1947, as a program that filtrate the federal employees’ loyalty toward the government.

The Red Scare is defined as “a series of actions by individuals and groups whose intentions were to frighten Americans with false and highly exaggerated charges of Communist subversion for the purpose of political, economic, and psychological profit” (Carlton13). The phase of postwar anticommunism was recognized in the American history as a decade of fear; it affected every facet of American life, and permeated in all levels of society, Carlton argued that “the anti-Communist hysteria of the late 1940s through the 1950s may have been the greatest crisis America has ever suffered in terms of her liberal and democratic values” (13). The British author David Cauter (1939) in his book *The Great Fear* (1939); mentioned that the Red Scare had a virulent effect in components of American life outside the national political and entertainment arenas. There were red scares in labor, education, religion, business, the fine arts, and, in multiplicity of forms, at the local community level.

## 2.2 The American Atmosphere of 1950's

Allan Brinkley, the professor of American History at Columbia University, and the author of *Voices of Protest, Huey Long, Father Coughlin, and The Great Depression* (1982), in his article *The Fifties* narrates that one of the spearheading events that denoted the 1950s was the fall of the Republican senator Joseph R. McCarthy, after the days of the Army-McCarthy Hearings in 1954. His fall established the end of the Red Scare and the decline of dread time. The rule days of McCarthy were associated with anticommunism, yet, he was considered as one of the numerous figures who helped in creating the great fear inside the American government (1).

Joseph R. McCarthy used intimidation to establish himself as a powerful political figure, his rule of terror lasted till 1954, after the denunciation of his colleagues about his tactics, the Army-McCarthy Hearings demonstrated his charges in discrediting many individuals who disagreed with his political perspectives (Historu.com Editors). Apart from this, the fall of the senator meant the end of the great fear in America; however, the society was subjected to the effect of the Red Scare for a long period, which drove to a various psychological problems that impacted American people for their entire lives.

On another side, the American economy after the end of the Second World War progressed in an enormous manner that was considered as an economic miracle. Zhang in *On the Beat Generation* states that "During World War II, the U.S. economy was not only unaffected by the war, but even more powerful than before the war" (205). The years of economic prosperity came to change the lives of Americans. After the economic growth; affluence was considered as a norm, and people believed that America was becoming wealthier. As well as that the growth of the average income from about \$2,200 per family per year to just under \$8,000; when was adjusted for inflation between 1940 and 1965. Besides, poverty decline in 1950s America by over 60 percent.

This remarkable growth is a result of several reasons including; first, the government spending which was the main factor in ending the depression of 1940s. The government expenditure by 1955, increased from one percent to seventeen percent, since sources such as government-sponsored research improved the economic progress. Second, the massive birth rate in America that was named the postwar baby boom as one of the major causes of economic increase. Finally, the transition of ten percent of the American population to suburbs, as a result; new markets were created, providing important sectors of the economy with a tremendous improvement, for instance; the housing industry, the automobile industry, and a wide range of consumer industries. All this economic changes affected the American prosperity (Brinkley 3).

America in the middle of the twentieth century trusted in turning into a middle-class nation, a society that gathers every citizen under one standard of living. Sixty percent of the American people were capable of home and car ownership (3). On the other hand, the rest of the people who represent the minority could not bear the cost of the middle-class way of living, as so as over twenty three percent of Americans suffered from poverty, and the majority of them were African-Americans. The period showed perfection for white Americans only, yet it was contradictory for the rest of the normal citizens (3). It is described as “an age of great optimism along with the gnawing fear of doomsday bombs, of great poverty in the midst of unprecedented prosperity, and of flowery rhetoric about equality along with the practice of rampant racism and sexism” (qtd in Halliwell 4). The American author and novelist F. Stone (1907-1989) described in his book *The Haunted Fifties* (1953-1963) the era as haunted due to the public culture. The public nation in the 1950s seemed to be a faultless surface; nevertheless, it was covering only the other dark surface of the nation, and this portrait progressively started to be comprehensible for the society and later prompted the exhibition of the first Civil Right Movement by African Americans in Montgomery

(Brinkley 3). After various Post-War encounters, the 1950s was challenging for Americans; they developed a mixture of difficulties, and an extensive stage of disillusion and restlessness,” Most significantly, these events disturbed family behavior, traditional gender arrangements and patterns of sexual behavior” (qtd.in Tan60).

Another key concept that shaped the atmosphere in the 1950s was pursuing of the American dream. Every American seemed to wish nothing but working hard to achieve a prosperous life and most importantly to have equal opportunity within the society. However, it was a hard goal to achieve for American due to the difficult stages that the country went through from the end of the Second World War, to the Cold War, the MacCarthy phenomenon, the spread of the red scare, the consumer society, the civil right movements, and each other event that affected America was an obstacle in the way of realizing the dream.

### **2.1.2 To Follow vs. To be Against**

American fifties was described as an age of conformity that illustrated the establishment of conventional family life, consumer culture and materialism. Parents, government, schools and society sought for conformity, living for the idea of “All American Family” an image of a typical family that should be followed by every American a family in which the fathers work to make a living, the mothers doing house work, children go to school and obey their parent’s rules.

A fundamental aspect of conformity was consumerism; the economic growth led to the creation of the consumer culture; people started to search for satisfaction throughout the acquisition of new products and boost industries. By 1950 87 percent of house holders owned TV, Americans spend over five hours a day in front of a TV. Huddleston in *The Beat Generation: They Were Hipsters Not Beatniks* explains that Television had a great impact not

only on people's political and social perception but also on consumerism; advertisers used TV as a medium of presenting their new products and their technological developments.

Americans followed the consumer culture as a way to purchase an ideal life style that "people of America were encouraged to follow the growing fashion of consumerism as a sort of a surrogate to leading a happy life" (Huddleston1). Religion, on the other hand, was considered as a desire for conformity and for social passage, it witnessed an excessive wave of interest, where sixty three percent of Americans joined churches, as a way of healing from previous anxieties of the cold war. Huddleston Americans wanted to take up life where it had left off before the war years with secure jobs, happy marriages, nice families, well-deserved retirement and a wide variety of consumer goods (2).

Conformity represented everything required to be safe and good citizens. While pursuing the American ideal, a nonconformist mindset also developed as a response to the purported prosperity of conformity. These rebellious nonconformists opposed the consumerism and middle-class lifestyle of the new Americans, focusing instead on the spiritual significance of life. This denial demonstrated how material affluence and economic growth don't always result in social harmony. Young nonconformist radicals' sense of defiance is the product of an artificial mirror of post-war society, and this mentality had a profound impact on society at all levels(1).

One of the nonconformists, who made a difference within the 1950s, was a group of writers and intellectuals figures who called themselves the Beatniks. Later on, they formed a larger movement in the 1960s, representing spontaneity, personal freedom including drugs, and homosexuality" (Brinkley3). They openly challenged the conventional values of middle-class American society: material success, social values, and political habits. Many of them adopted an alternative lifestyle for themselves that emphasized rootlessness, anti materialism,

drugs, antagonism to technology and organization, sexual freedom, and dark numbing despair about the nature of modern society.(Brinkley 3). “But most of all the Beats were in search of “ecstasy,” of a release from the rational world, of a retreat from what they considered the repressive culture of their time” ( 3). Nonconformity took a place also within the teen music of the 1950s, Rock and Roll’s emergence marked a history of newness for Americans, they differed from ordinary citizens and from other artists of the time, they were different not only in clothing but also in their hairstyles, an example of Elvis Presley, and Chuck Berry nonconformist artists who popularized Rock music, alongside with making its impact last forever.

## **2.2 Post-World War II American Literature**

Post -WWII phase brought a new America to the world; the transformation did not reach only politics and society, but also literature. American Literature before the end of the Second World War dealt with themes and literary styles that were directly influenced by the war and its leftovers; since most of the writers formed a part of the WWI and the WWII experience, there was no originality in themes. After the end of the WWII a new literature came to change the previous one in form, style and most importantly in themes. This shift occurred after different literary movements as a form of resistance by authors who refused the previous generalization of themes and style, “Post WWII saw the publication of some of the most popular creative writing in American history”(O’Hagen8).

### **2.2.1 Characteristics of the 1950s American Writers:**

In the twentieth century, American literature witnessed the creation of remarkable literary figures, those last thrived literature whether in fiction, drama, or poetry. Before the 1950s, authors used to follow the traditions of their archetypes in their writings. Later on, with the appearance of movements such as the Beat Generation and the Hippies, literature

started to be isolated from the past costumes. Not only American writers were involved but also African-American along with Jewish and numerous other ethnic writers. Writers accompanied their new writing style, adding new forms and themes to literature, giving rise to the concept of postmodernists, while unrest against the system and ethnic issues were popular themes. New genres as comic books, fantasy novels, and horror stories appeared.

The American literature over history went through various steps, each period made the literary works of the time originated explicitly. American authors, play writers and poets, proved their existence as dominant literary figures in history. Every phase has its notable writers and works, whereas literary works were directly influenced by the political, social, as well as cultural status of the country. The 1920s and 1930s are marked by the long-lasting works of Hemingway along with Steinbeck. Additionally, the years from 1945 till 1960, brought a vast shift into topics and forms of American literature, the shift consequently emerged due to various Post- WWII events including; cold war, the civil rights movement, the Beat Generation and the Hippies. With this in mind, the phase was described as a postmodern era that broke some rules of the previous modernist period.

Writers of the twentieth century were divided into multiple divergences; some selected the depiction of war experiences, and their tragic leftovers on people's life. An example of Norman Mailer's *The Naked and The Dead* (1948), which takes place during WWII in the Pacific , and Joseph Heller *Catch 22* (1961), a war novel taking place in the Mediterranean. While others preferred to hold the psychological impact of the war experience; the best example is J.D Slinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) that expressed

the voice of alienation and irresponsibly issues throughout the characters of the story, also Tennessee Williams' *A Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* or *A Streetcar Named Desire* play is one of the remarkable plays of psychological issues. As for writers addressing resistance against the social and political structure of the period, Jack Kerouac *On the Road* (1957), Allen Ginsberg's *The Howl* (1956), represents the best example of writing for alteration and insurgency, since they were the leaders of the Beat Generation; their works developed a sense of influence and inspiration for the 1950s society (Zhang 207).

### **2.2.2 The Beat Generation's Outbreak**

Social prosperity and conformity did not fulfill the needs of every American citizen during the second half of the twentieth century. Nonconformist intellectuals came to confirm the suggestion of how social and political prosperity could be a leading reason behind a vast resistance. The beat movement is a form of rebellion against Post- World War II America, in relation to the social environment of the time, Zhang stated that:

The American Beat Generation came into being in a special environment of the consumer society after World War II .The consumer society and the political pressure stimulated the Beat Generation's consciousness of anti-tradition and anti- modern civilization. It tells us: In a society with material prosperity, spiritual oppression could probably become the root of rebellion; Youth problems are generally macroeconomic, structural and social; the imbalanced development of youth participation awareness and participation opportunities could be an important reason for youth rebellion (205).

The Beat generation was formed by a group of young writers and poets, challenging the American traditional values in the 1950s. Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, and William Burroughs were considered the three crucial writers of the Beat Generation.

Rad in *Portrayal of American society in Jack Kerouac's "On the Road"* states that:

The Beat Generation or the Beat Movement was a group of writers and friends who wrote poetry and prose, experimented with drugs, traveled across the country while being involved in alternative forms of sexuality and subsequently had a major impact on the future of American literature (4).

Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, and William Burroughs launched the outbreak of the Beat Generation in the 1950s, forming a force of questioning conformity along with denying the traditional values of Post World War II. One of the main concern for people was the meaning of the Beat, in 1948, Jack Kerouac coined the term Beat, Cresswell mentioned that the word means beatific, and the beat of jazz and pop music (253), Kerouac created the statement Beat Generation "The phrase was introduced to the public in 1952 when Kerouac's friend John Clellon Holmes wrote an article "This is the Beat Generation" for the New York Times Magazine" (Zhang205).

The movement is a rebellion of young teenagers against cultural and political conservatism, rejecting any form of materialism, and developing interests in literary and physical freedom. The Beat writers formed their literary style and topics. The outbreak of the Beats occurred due to two main powerful literary works; Allen Ginsberg's poem *The Howl* in 1956, stood as a turning point for nonconformist writers and poets. The long poem reflected the rage and excitement of young people, Zhang stated that:

Ginsberg takes the reader/listener on a tour of the underside of America. There are drug-addicts, drifters, prostitutes, and swindlers. There is a visceral rage against the system that requires conformity and selling-out. Foul language and slang are common throughout the work, as well as drug use and criminality. All of these things were shocking to the 1950s establishment. But for Ginsberg, he was simply following the path of his inspiration (207).

Although *The Howl* was described as a disgraceful poem by orthodox literature of the 1950s, yet it was considered as the Bible of the Beat Generation (207).

“Erik R. Mortensen briefly explains that not everyone welcomed the idea of growing consumerism in America, and Jack Kerouac with his novel *On the Road* was one such voice of dissent” (Rad5). Kerouac proposed by his novel the meaning of living without any social or traditional pressure, he intended to construct an independent critical mindset for Americans and encourage them to resist the middle-class life, Rad also states that:

We can consider Kerouac's novel as not only an observation and a critique of American society but also as an attempt to make a certain impact upon American people to embrace a different kind of life, one which is not bound by political fear and consumer lifestyle, but presents an attempt to consider one's own position in the world and search for a deeper meaning in life (17).

The Beat Generation, in behavior, used anti-morals attitudes such as drugs, homosexuality, and prostitution as an escape of the high-pressure of the paranoid society after the end of the Second World War “young people couldn't struggle with the powerful social mechanism, and the means they expressed their emotions and thoughts were very restricted, so they took some extreme ways to highlight their alienation from the mainstream society” (Zhang208). Still; the insurgence of the Beats did not grounds a material harm to the society, they originated their ideas using unique methods to adjust the culture of the 1950s.

The crisis of the Beats was the false representation of their message by media; they were watered down by media and turned into a beatnik fad this depiction was heartbreak for beat fans. In 1962, James F. Scott declared that the artists of the beats were failures; in addition to that, the Beat movement is about to expire; however, his view proved to be incorrect when the Times launched that the works of the beat writers were the best literary works in history; Kerouac' *On The Road*, Burroughs's *The Naked Lunch*, and Ginsberg's *The Howl* were part of the list of the 100 best English Language novels (Hudleston14).

The movement of the Beats faded in the 1960s. Yet, its impact lasted for decades after the next generation praised their messages, which built new readers with critical intellectual, as well as an inspiration for the next generations of writers and movements of the 1960s "These groups added momentum to the existing fight for Black civil rights, revamped the women's movement, protested against Vietnam and the arms race, and brought about an ecological consciousness" (15). Although people in the 1950s could not change their stable lives completely to follow the path of the Beats; nevertheless, they challenged the intolerance of the Establishment and injustice captivating the support from the Beat Generation.

## **Conclusion**

The end of the Second World War during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was an era that shaped a new American status whether politically, socially, or culturally. The USA went through various events that left an impact on Americans for decades. The emergence of the consumer society, and the age of affluence, and conformity in America as a result of various political and economical leftovers, Post-WWII era led to a wave of resistance within American writers, play writers, and poets, in which they expressed their opposition toward the consumer, and conservative society of the period. It was a time where the American literature

left a big influence on Americans, and changed the mentality of a whole generation due to multiple influential literary movements. To sum up, the Beats reflected their non conformist attitude toward the existing cultural and the prejudice political status in America.

## **Chapter Three: The Writer s' Rebellion**

### **Introduction**

Kerouac's novel is regarded as a piece of literature that captures the ideals of the Beat Generation. Kerouac's depictions of various issues are a manifestation of his opposition to the strict conventions of American culture. The characters serve as the backbone of the rebellion; it is through their actions that the Beats' desire for a countercultural lifestyle is first expressed. Characters' journey starts and finishes on the road.

In this chapter we are going to analyze the method that Kerouac uses in his novel in providing his resistant to achieve his purpose. Therefore, this chapter is divided into three major themes of Kerouac's rebellion. In the first part, we are going to deal with the concept of Alienation in the novel and it's implication between male and female roles. In the second part, we are going to examine how displacement is used by Kerouac's characters as a type of an escape and a rebellion. Finally, the chapter will focus on the counter-culture movement of Kerouac, with his presentation of sexual liberation between genders and how they are demonstrated in the novel.

### **3.1. Alienation in Kerouac's *On the Road***

The story depicts the conflict that emerged between the man and his society in post-World War II America. American society was dominated by individualism in the 1960s as a result of the conformity that followed World War II .Kerouac was the leader of the movement; portrayed the notion of individualism in *On the Road* throughout the characters, his concept of living a free lifestyle; where everyone builds his own rules and following his desire to be free. This is achieved through male characters in the novel, especially Sal Paradise and Dean Moriarty. The characters focuses mainly on doing only what their mind tells them to do, which represent the complete contradiction to conformity, and to the American Middle-class society during the Post WWII era (Thomson3).

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Sal Paradise, the book's main character and narrator, uses his individualism to communicate his rejection to American society's. In order to show how the main protagonists refused to adhere to the traditional regulations of the official national route, the author showed their displacement by using rivers throughout the entire journey. When he characterizes his southern relatives on his trip as having "whining voices" and talking about the "general tiresome recapitulation of who had a baby, who got a new house, and so on," it is clear that he rejects the American Dream of owning a home and a family (Kerouac 108). On the other hand, Dean Moriarty is a prime example of shirking one's obligations. "Dean represents the New World at its most anarchistic and individualistic apex" (2010).

Dean's actions demonstrate his contempt for community. The wife of Dean's acquaintance, according to reviewer Hunt, made him think about his own family ( 39). However, he keeps avoiding his obligations out of pure individual independence and for no other significant reasons. According to psychology, Dean's rebellious behavior is due to a family crisis that occurred.

### **3.1.1 Male Vs Female Roles.**

Sal Paradise and Dean Moriarty show their clear detachment from the conventional standards of their society by pursuing Individuality. However, collectivism continues to exist in their lives, even if they do not improve it. The American critic Tim Cresswell argues in his book *Mobility as Resistant*, how individualism is related directly in leading a public life, giving the example of the public life that Sal and Dean chooses to live; which is traveling, their life than is tied directly to individual experience(258). Not only their journey that reflects their individual freedom, but also their inability on maintaining a job, Sal however, portrays their status as an optimism perception of thinking and not as an impediment, when he compares Dean with his intellectual friends:

Dean's intelligence was every bit as formal and shining and complete, without the tedious intellectualness. [...] Besides, all my New York friends were in the negative, nightmare position of putting down society and giving

their tired bookish or political or psychoanalytical reasons, but Dean just raced in society, eager for bread and love; he didn't care one way or the other, 'so long's I can get that lil ole gal with that lil sumpin down there between her legs boy" (Kerouac 8).

Collectivism, in contrast is related to the private life of the characters, for instance, Sal is a jobless man most of the time, nevertheless his journey across America depends on financial support to attain it, the financial support comes from his Aunt "I shot my aunt a penny postcard across the land and asked for another fifty" (98), Sal here declare his relying financially on his aunt; which is a form of a collectivism basis. In addition the dualism between individualism and collectivism present the development of women's role in the Post-WWII American society, where they embark on entering the work-force and begin to be financially independents and supporters to men. An example of this is embodied in Paradise's words of "She said she'd work picking grapes and make enough money for both of us; meanwhile I could live in Farmer Heffelfinger's barn down the road from her family. I'd have nothing to do but sit in the grass all day and eat grapes" (99), the quote reflects the absolute opposition of the 1950s nuclear American family throughout the new admission of women to employment. The novel than portrays the new role of women as collectivism progression in Post Second World War America.

### **3.2 Displacement in Kerouac's *On the Road***

The whole journey of characters represents the desire for travelling and moving from one place to another all across America. Mobility is about moving, and keeping in action, for the Beat Generation, it's a necessity of life just like breathing or eating. Cresswell states how the novel gave a new meaning for mobility; as

being more than just an adventure for excitement, but also as a journey for freedom and searching once identity “In 1949, when the adventures in *On the road* took place, a car meant more than it does today” (254).

Sal Paradise and Dean Moriarty realized how moving is important. Both of them left their responsibilities for living a journey on the road, they selected hitchhiking or using only cars, Cresswell describe it as “As the story develops it becomes clear that non-stop 'going' for its own sake is the main joy of the two friends” (254). For Sal and Dean, mobility introduces different actions into their lives, they enjoyed every experience on the road. For instance, eating, sleeping having sexual relations, and meeting new people along the road, than leaving those people behind them, all those experiences reflect the symbol and the value of the road; as not only a way to travel but also to live on it, in which it is declared by Sal “Our battered suitcases were piled on the sidewalks again; we had longer ways to go. But no matter, the road is life” (Kerouac 209). the critic Cresswell agrees that Kerouac is experiencing the lifestyle of mobile people, where he made it the central theme in the characters of the novel “Geographers have increasingly been concerned with the representation of marginal (ized) groups such as ethnic minorities (Jackson, 1991), women (Domosh, 1991) and people with a mobile lifestyle” (251). The road for Sal and Dean is where their friendship started and ended:

I first met Dean not long after my wife and I split up. I had just gotten over a serious illness that I won't bother to talk about, except that it had something to do with the miserably weary split-up and my feeling that everything was dead. With the coming of Dean Moriarty began the part of my life you could call my life on the road (Kerouac 1).

Sal expressed how the road is related to their friendship, and the beginning of the mobile life that he and Dean enjoys, where Cresswell illustrate their status of; how their friendship begin with their separation from any female relationship and making mobility a lifestyle “Immediately we have the leaving of a woman and the arrival of a male friend. Their friendship is immediately associated with the road. In fact the duration of Sal/Dean friendship marks the period of Sal’s life he calls his ‘life on the road’ (258).

### **3.2.1 Displacement as an Escape toward Freedom**

There are various reasons behind the Beat’s mobility. They have been subjected to multiple situation, where they felt that society does not except, or respect them, that resulted their escape toward loneliness, an example when Sal speaks to his friend Dean “I told Dean I was sorry he had nobody in the world to believe in him” (Kerouac 215). Kerouac reflects the way that the Beats were under the pressure as members of society; they lost their sense of belonging, and in different situation they are mistreated by people, such as when Sal narrates the rude and aggressive behavior of a Policeman toward them multiple times during their trip:

“Yessir,” said a fat cop who'd spent twenty-two years as a guard  
in Alcatraz. “You could go to jail for doing something like that.”

The others nodded grimly. They were always sitting around on  
their asses; they were proud of their jobs. They handled their guns  
and talked about them. They were itching to shoot somebody.

Remi and me. (64-65)

The protective behavior toward the Beat characters like Sal and Remi, from different members of society; represent the manner they are treated as useless Americans. As a result, mobility is their escape from loneliness, to freedom. They lost their belonging within society,

but they turned it to an enjoyable escape, as if they have nowhere but everywhere to go to as Sal says:

Although Gene was white, there was something of wise and tired old Negro in him, and something very much like Elmer Hassel, the New York dope addict, in him, but a railroad Hassel, crossing and recording the country every year, South in the winter and north in the summer, and only because he had no place he could stay in without getting tired of it and because there was somewhere to go but everywhere, keep Rolling under the stars, generally the Western stars” (26).

Another aspect that symbolizes the reason behind mobility, is the weakness of the Beats in facing their realities, Kerouac mentioned how mobility reflects the characters’ resistance. Despite the fact that they form a movement of youth rebellion, yet they escape from any responsibility, in this context the protagonist states the relation between the Beats and society “I was arrested in Arizona, the joint absolutely the worst joint I’ve ever been in. I had to escape and pulled the greatest escape in my life, speaking of escapes, you see, in a general way” (229). At this point, Hilary Holladay argues how mobility is connected to power explaining that the Beats are using mobility as a escape from facing reality “These forms of exchange, however, ultimately serve to destabilize connections that Kerouac and Cassady want and need to make between mobility, masculinity, and power”(Holladay and Holton, XII).

### **3.2.2. Travelling vs. Staying Home**

Besides keeping away from society, mobility takes another figure for the Beats; it became a confrontation against the 1950s society norms, and the middle-class typical American family. Kerouac establishes how the American society of the time, forces them to follow certain manners, and behaviors that needs to be implicated by every member of the

society. Those behaviors for most of people seemed to be normal standards in living a normal life, however, for the Beats, they are no more than boundaries who threatens their freedom, so mobility is then their reaction toward any social values, as Sal says :

This is the story of America. Everybody's doing what they think they're supposed to do. So what if a bunch of men talk in loud voices and drink the night? But Sledge wanted to prove something. He made sure to bring me along in case they jumped him. They might have. They were all brothers, all from Alabama. We strolled back to the station, Sledge in front and m in back (66-67).

Sal expresses his concept of rejecting, with his desire to break the rules that Americans are following in life, giving the example of talking out loud or drinking all night. In this context, Sal joins his friends, in traveling across the country as a form of rebellion, where the critic Cresswell here says that “Mobility is a central theme in North American culture yet, in *On the road*, Kerouac clearly uses it in a resistant fashion” (253). Although the mobile lifestyle of the characters, attaches them along the journey with undesirable people such as hobos and queers, “I even spent a whole night with a girl on a park bench, till dawn, without success. She was a blonde from Minnesota. There were plenty of queers” (Kerouac 72), yet their adventure is not like any normal one; it is a line of hope toward freedom and happiness, nevertheless, the West for characters, is assert to be their only choice to happiness, as Sal says “Beyond the glittering street was darkness, and beyond the darkness the West. I had to go” (55).

Mobility took the form of rebellion by characters, not only toward their society norms but also toward themselves; the road is a rebellion to find their inner self, their meaning in life, and their identities:

Driving across the West with the long stretches my scythe had to be immeasurably longer and it had to curve over distant mountains, slicing off their tops, and reach another level to get at further mountains and at the same time clip off every post along the road, regular throbbing poles (204).

Kerouac uses mobility as a search for identity, in Creswell words “the frantic directionless mobility of the central figures in *On the road* represents a form of resistance to the 'establishment’” (249). The real life of the Beat Generation is reflected throughout the characters, the life that Kerouac himself created from his long journey, his characters seek for a real and ideal America, in this context; their resistant is based on changing the life of American people, into a life where they can live according to their own desires, without any restrictive values. The title of book itself is an embodiment of moving in the Beat Generation’s life, in Mortenson words “The title itself hints at this; the book is more concerned with movement than with fixed location” ( 53).

### **3.3. The Counter-Culture of Kerouac’s Characters**

American Post-WWII era is considered as a transitional phase American history. The conservative society begin to get a new consumer culture, things such as Cars, and TVs begin to overlap the lifestyle of Americans. Therefore a counter- culture movement appeared in opposition of the dominant society and culture in Cresswell words:

The counter-culture as a 'movement' has all the characteristics of an 'oppositional' movement defined by Williams (1980) - the provision of alternative facilities for the production, exhibition and publication of certain kinds of work which actively oppose established institutions and the conditions within which these exist (254).

Kerouac and his youth friends represent the insurgence of the alternative American lifestyle; their rebellion takes many forms that later on shape the central part of the Beat Generation's standards, in which Kerouac reflects it in his characters. The protagonist Sal Paradise, along with his friends enjoyed their journey on the road, since it's in itself their way of expressing their counter-culture; living on the road, hitchhiking, homosexual relations, and every other experience they had on the journey, was a form of a rebellion. Cresswell portrays this concept in which he states " The beat-generation was a central part of this counter culture and Kerouac's novel played a key role in the creation of the beat-generation. On the road has remained an influential and popular book - a central symbol in the iconography of the 'youthful rebellion" (255). The undesirable culture of Sal and his friends starts from making mobility a lifestyle where they are permitted to do what they want. All what seems to be dream before the journey, became reality on the road. Paradise enjoyed the madness of his journey; searching for meaning of life in the same time of living against the society values, which Sal confirms in his words:

the only people for me are the mad ones, the ones who are  
 mad to live, mad to talk, mad to be saved, desirous of  
 everything at the same time, the ones who never yawn or say  
 a commonplace thing, but burn, burn, burn like fabulous  
 yellow roman candles (Kerouac 6).

### **3.3.1. Sexual Liberation of Kerouac's Characters**

The subject of sexual liberation is one of the pioneers of the Beat Generation. In the novel, the nonconformist attitude of Kerouac's characters resembles their sexual and homosexual liberation as an outward appearance of their counter-culture values.

The experience of sex is mentioned constantly in the book, in which most of the time is described as random behavior that Dean and Sal enjoys. The kind of sexual liberation provided in the book, focuses on only men's desire. Dean Moriarty is the champion of sexual relation. Sal narrates how it is an important aspect in Dean's life as "for to him sex was the only holy and important thing in life" (2). Giving the description of his abilities in seducing, and making love to women. In contrast to male characters, females are described as only sexual attraction, which demonstrates the manner women are not liberated the same way as men in the novel, an example of Dean's wife Marylou, when she leaves Sal, and walks off with a nightclub owner, he describe her as "I saw what a whore she was" (170). Marylou's behavior represents the contradiction to the nuclear American family, where women are supposed to obey their husbands, take care of children, and most importantly, have sexual relations with just their husbands. Although Sal and Dean oppose the society values and they are the representatives of rebellion, yet their view of women is limited, in other words, sexual liberation in *On the Road* is their rebellious behavior toward conformity, the novel concentrate only on male desires, and neglects women's desire in life.

### **Conclusion**

Kerouac's portrayal to the character's refusal to his social norms has been directed to various themes, this refusal differed in all ways from any previous one. The writer shaped his own new standards that meant to be followed by his Beat friends. The value of resistant in the life of the Beat Generation is reflected through the characters in *On the Road*. For Kerouac the road is holy, and the journey was huge. They experienced a new vision of life, a life on the road, they discovered multiple places in the country, Kerouac resembled America as an old man that teach them and tell them something in every step of their journey. His adventure is an escape from reality to freedom, an insurgence against society, and a search for identity and the meaning of life.

## Chapter Four: The Writer s' Literary Rebellion

### Introduction

Kerouac portrayed the troubles that faced Americans during the fifties in searching for their lost identity. The major part of his rebellious behavior is apparent in creating a new style of writing as an attempt of challenging the traditional literary style of America. Jack Kerouac introduces what is called spontaneous prose as a reflection of his rebellion throughout literature. One of the main principles of his spontaneous style is the illustration of jazz culture in the stylistic form of *On the Road*. He resembled his admiration of jazz music throughout an unusual language and an unconventional form of sentences. Another major principle of Kerouac's rebellious voice is the publication of the ground-breaking 1953 *Essentials of Spontaneous Prose*, where he introduces new literary methods of writing.

From this point, this chapter is an examination of Kerouac's new style. It is going to be introduced throughout two chief points of explanation, first we are going to deal with the presence of jazz culture in the plot structure of the novel, and how Kerouac's influence of jazz music is reflected in the novel.

#### 4.1 The jazz Culture in Kerouac's *On the Road*

Jack Kerouac's masterpiece *On the Road* is considered as one of the most prominent novels that reflects the Beat Generation's attitude after its appearance in 1957. He proved to be a beating figure of his time due to the unrecognizable content of his novel. Not only the new themes that signals the spontaneous style of the author, but also the distinctive language used.

The rebellion of Kerouac is also portrayed through his literary style in the novel, he introduces a language that is based on his worship of jazz music, as an attempt of creating a rebellious literary voice, toward his previous works before *On the Road* an example of his novel *The town and The city*, that is written on the foundation of traditional writing standards before discovering his voice and energy.

The American critic Ann Douglas who's interested in analyzing the American culture comments on Kerouac's ability of presenting a diverse literary work from his generation writers saying that Jack Kerouac's work "represents the most extensive experiment in language and literary form undertaken by an American writer of his generation"(qtd in Douglas 85). Various critics and analysts such as Edward Foster and Bruce Cook, share the reorganization of the existence of jazz culture in Kerouac's work while he uses his understanding and of jazz improvisation in *On the Road*. Furthermore, this influence of jazz is depicted into the plot structure of the novel within first; the actions of characters, and second, with the innovative literary language. Jazz plays an important role in the novel, in which Kerouac forms his own literary rules, based on jazz's semiotic and ideological implications, rather than using the traditional rules of literature in either the form or the context (85).

#### **4.1.1 Jazz in the Plot Structure of the Novel**

Jazz culture is used as the central metaphor in the novel; in which Kerouac demonstrates this last at different levels, within the sentence structure and word choice. Tim Cresswell in his book *Mobility as Resistance*, notes that the writing techniques of Kerouac moves the reader with the events the same as the central characters are moving across the country, this style proves the creation of Kerouac's own stylistic devices and rules in the plot structure of *On the Road* (256). The influence of jazz in the life of characters is illustrated in multiple positions; where Sal and Dean express their interest of jazz music throughout their

journey, an example when Sal narrates “After spending a good part of the morning in Negro bars and chasing gals and listening to jazz records on jukeboxes” ( Kerouac 243).

The central concern of Kerouac is to avoid any traditional structural essentials when writing his novel, therefore he focuses first on escaping from linear in the plot structure, and using instead the structural metaphor of jazz music, Cresswell words “*On the road* starts to explore the possibility of breaking out of the linear mode while retaining a temporally linear plot structure” (256), this attempt by Kerouac is an indication of a concept named as “the crisis of representation”. Cresswell also mentions how the style used by Kerouac tolerates the movement of his purpose, where the passages in the novel are derived from jazz music and they contain rhythms, cadences and internal sound system. Another aspect in the construction of the passages is the way that sentences moves in the same manner of the actions they are describing, for instance when Sal narrates:

We wheeled through the sultry old light of Algiers, back on the ferry,  
back toward the mud-splashed, crabbed old ships across the river,  
back on Canal, and out; on a two-lane highway to Baton Rouge in  
purple darkness; swung west there, crossed the Mississippi at a place  
called Port Alien ( Kerouac 154).

Cresswell comments on the passage; at first, that the length of the sentence is created in purpose of not interrupting the image that the author is concerned to establish, following this point, “Wheeled” is an essential word that the passage turns around, where the rest of the sentence serves the concept of wheeling that Kerouac is introducing. Moreover, the word back is repeated several times in the quote, as it reflects the basic principle of jazz music which is repetition. The critic than analyses the reason of Kerouac’s use of rhythms and sounds in the passage saying that:

The initial 'w' and long 'ee' sounds are continued in the rhythmic use of vowel sounds in 'ul' (sultry), 'ol' (old) and 'Al' (Algiers). Similarly the short stabbing 'a' in 'back' is echoed in 'splashed' and 'crabbed'. Kerouac uses the sound and rhythm of words to pack a great deal of movement into a short piece (256).

Kerouac wrote the first draft of *On the Road* on a roll of paper in a 120 foot long unpunctuated paragraph, as an attempt of describing his non-stop experience with a non-stop statements, using untraditional language and form that contradict his previous works. Malcolm Douglas in "*Jazz America*": *Jazz and African American Culture in Jack Kerouac's On the Road* notes how Kerouac's novel break of the literary usual rules "On the Road, for instance, was initially written on the legendary roll of paper so as to be composed in an unavoidably linear fashion" ( 91).

Furthermore, publishing the novel was rejected by various editors due to its unconventional structure and context; the first version of *On the Road* was presented to Robert Giroux the editor of Jack Kerouac, yet he refused to publish the book. It was until the editor Viking convinced Kerouac on adding chapters and standard grammar to the work, the novel than was published nine years after it was written. Although the version of the novel is edited, still his energy of breaking conventional norms is in attendance. The sentences in *On the Road* reflect the influence of jazz in the life of Kerouac in the sense that he is describing the traveling experience of characters as a jazz solo, an example of the main character Sal Paradise:

The air was so sweet in New Orleans it seemed to come in soft bandannas;  
and you could smell the river and really smell the people, and mud, and

molasses, and every kind of tropical exhalation with your nose suddenly removed from the dry ices of a Northern winter. (Kerouac 138).

The narrator in the quote is not speaking about New Orleans but on his experience of being in New Orleans in a mobile way, jazz than is referred by Kerouac in the novel through his description of his characters' mobile experience.

*On the Road* is a work that differs from other literary works since the sentence structures are produced by sounds, breathtaking and using musical voices instead of literary conventions, Douglas believes that breathing is an example of how Kerouac made it as a punctuation rather than the traditional literary punctuation "Breathing punctuates his sentences, and the primary structure that controls his spontaneity is the physical dimensions of his writing surface" (91), this style of Kerouac is a way of passing on the spontaneous movements in the novel. Douglas states that:

While jazz does play a significant role in the novel, its impact lies in the music's ideological, behavioral, and semiotic implications- in particular their roots in African American culture-rather than in the direct application of its formal rules ( 85),

Jazz than is an initial role in the novel, where the impact of it related to the musical behaviors of African American culture as it is portrayed in Sal's words "we got in the car and drove all over Richmond across the bay, hitting Negro jazz shacks in the oil flats" (Kerouac 174).

The critic Mike Janssen, next to Edward Foster and Bruce Cook, illustrates that the Beats created a style named bop prosody as a result of using the basic principles of bebop playing and applied it in their literary writing whether in prose or poetry (Douglas 86). Robert Hipkiss in contrast, is not convinced about the effect of jazz in the work of the Beat Generation "The jazz idiom with which Kerouac and the Beats operated is ... in great measure

responsible for his uninspired blowing as well as the occasionally ecstatic outbursts of poetic statement” (qtd in Douglas 86), as well as he believes that Kerouac is only using his jazz vocabulary as an illustration of what he is trying to do. For most critics, the leading standard of Kerouac’s spontaneity is the reference of jazz culture in *On the Road*. Additionally, Kerouac explains in Paris Review Interview the concept of jazz in his writing saying that:

Jazz and bop, in the sense of a, say, a tenor man drawing a breath and blowing a phrase on his saxophone, till he runs out of breath, and when he does, his sentence, his statement's been made that's how I therefore separate my sentences, as breath separations of the mind (qtd in Douglas 91).

Regina Weinreich along with Tim Hunt investigates the notion of improvisation and the impact jazz culture in Kerouac’s *On the Road*, arguing about his ability in creating his own literary rules in the context and language structure of the novel saying :

Kerouac's "notion of improvisation informs the language of [his] writing at an exact technical level. Though Kerouac had neither the knowledge of a musician nor the critical vocabulary of a person learned in the subject of music, he clearly demonstrates a profound identification of the creation of music with that of literary works (qtd in Douglas 86).

Kerouac in his novel *On the Road* proved to be a beating writer of his time not only by creating a great movement but also throughout his unconventional writing style which reflect his demonstration of rebellious youth within the form and subjects of his novel.

## **Conclusion**

The rebellion of the Beat Generation’s figure; Jack Kerouac took part of his novel in the course of his intelligence establishment of an original literary language and style that made his resistance a unique literary resistance. The spontaneous prose procedures that he formed are a presentation of his rebellious voice toward the writers of his time in changing not only the 1950s ideology of the American society but also changing the writing methods

of the literary works. In this context, both Jazz culture, and the Spontaneous Prose techniques replicate the basis explanation behind the considerable impact of *On the Road* as a beating novel of its time, where Kerouac proves to be a nonconventional writer in the twentieth century American literature.

## General Conclusion

After the end of the Second World War America witnessed a new lifestyle including social, economical and political changes. The life of American citizens transformed due to numeral events, starting from the Cold War era to a phase of communism fear. In addition, to the Red Scare period and the fall of the senator Joseph R. McCarthy, all of the political events have affected the life of American people in all domains. The 1950s established the embodiment of what was called the consumer middle-class society, a lifestyle that every American citizen could possibly afford; people begin to live the middle-class life that seemed to be the perfect example of every American family, the typical family where the father is responsible for working, the mother for cooking and taking care of children, and the kids for going to school and obeying their parents.

The second half of the twentieth century became the establishment of an affluent society and entering the age of conformity in USA in which it is the illustration of living an idealize and a safe lifestyle. As much as the fifties seemed as the perfect image of Americans, however, some felt that the standards of conformity do not capture their real vision or meaning of life, these last developed a nonconformist attitude and a counter-culture movement in opposition to their middle-class conventional values. This wave gave birth to the Beat movement that changed the vision of typical America life in the 1950s.

This research examines the role of the Beat leader Jack Kerouac in creating a rebellious literary movement throughout his novel *On the Road*. The novel is an autobiography of the author's road-trip across the country for over four years. Kerouac reflects in his characters the lifestyle that the Beats want to live. The novel produced a wide range influence in the life of many writers and poetics, as it is considered as the central leading work of literature in challenging the traditional social pressure.

The protagonist and the narrator of the novel *Sal Paradise*, along with his friend Dean Moriarty launched a road-trip where they chose to hitchhike and using only cars in their journey. The adventure of the characters in the story is a way of finding the meaning of life, as well as contradicting to the society norms and standards, the main characters represent the values of the Beat Generation. Sal and Dean, select an individual life in opposition to collective life, they meet in their journey various people, but they leave them behind every time, their individuality is a form of living an individual freedom in different attitudes, for instance the freedom of traveling, drug consumption, random sexual and homosexual relations on the road trip. Kerouac also, in *On the Road* concentrated on the meaning and the importance of mobility in the life of characters, the mobile life is used as an escape from any responsibility of life, in the same time as an establishment of the rebellious mentality toward the middle-class American family on the 1950s.

The novel begins with an exemplification of both sadness and disappointment in the life of character; the story starts from Sal's separation with his wife, and ends with the departure of his friend Dean, as if the plot of the novel goes around and around the same circle, as Kerouac's way of discovering himself and the deep spiritual truth of his life. The novel reflects the role and the image of women in the life of the main characters in various positions. The whole adventure contradicts to the lifestyle of typical American society of the time, this contradiction is in the form of individual freedom to counterculture and a mobile lifestyle that Sal and Dean lived.

Jack Kerouac in *On the Road*, developed his unique literary style and language, he wrote the plot structure of the novel in the basis of jazz music rhythms. His rebellion is portrayed through his own language use and form of writing, where his admiration of jazz music formed the whole structure of the novel; he refused using any traditional grammatical

standards of writing. Another form of Kerouac's literary resistance is creating a unique techniques and methods in writing which is named as spontaneous prose.

*On the Road* than became Kerouac's mean of transforming the youth generation and advocating a rebellious impact throughout the themes and the structure of the book. He proved to be an unconventional figure in comparison to the writers of his time. Kerouac found his identity and his authentic voice in *On the Road*. By leading the Beat Generation, he opened the eyes of millions into a life outside the mainstream of the American society and the American literature.

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