

**T.C.  
ISTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**THE BEAT GENERATION, THE MARGINAL SOCIAL GROUP OF THE  
POST WWII AMERICAN LITERATURE: A STUDY OF CHANDLER  
BROSSARD'S *WHO WALK IN DARKNESS* AND JOHN CLELLON  
HOLMES'S *GO***

**THESIS**

**RANDI SALAH YALDA ARMOTA**

**Department of English Language and Literature**

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**Thesis Advisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ferma Lekesizalin**

**October - 2015**

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T.C.  
İSTANBUL AYDIN ÜNİVERSİTESİ  
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ

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*To my late father, mother, friends, and whoever appreciates this work.*

## **FOREWORD**

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**Randi Salah Yalda ARMOTA**

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**BEAT GENERASYONU, İKİNCİ DÜNYA SAVAŞI SONRASI AMERIKAN  
EDEBİYATININ MARJİNAL SOSYAL GRUBU: CHANDLER  
BROSSARD'IN *WHO WALK IN DARKNESS* VE JOHN CLELLON  
HOLMES'UN *GO* ESERLERİNİN ÇALIŞMASI**

**ÖZET**

Bu çalışma İkinci Dünya Savaşı sonrası Amerika'daki marjinal toplumsal grup olan The Beat kuşağını ve Amerikan kültürü ve toplumu üzerinde büyük bir etkisi olan The Beat hareketinin başlıca eserleri olan Chandler Brossard'ın *Who Walks in Darkness* ile John Clellon Holmes'un *Go* eserlerini incelemektedir. Beat'in kültürel ve sosyal mirası altmışlı yılların kültür karşıtları, hippiler, savaş karşıtı hareketi ve hatta sivil hak hareketlerini etkilemiştir. Elbette Amerikan edebiyatına çok önemli yenilikler getirdiler. Allen Ginsberg ve Lawrence Ferlinghetti gibi şairler ile Jack Kerouac gibi yeni ve özgün bir bakış açısına sahip olan romancıların yapı ve tarz alanlarına önemli katkıları olmuştur. Beat edebiyatını seçmiş olmamın sebebi bu alandaki şair ve yazarların muhalif tutumları ve muhalif bir kültür oluşturmaya çalışmalarındandır. Modern Amerikan edebiyatına çok geniş bir perspektif ile bakarsak bile bu yazar ve şairlerin Amerikan toplumunda savaş sonrası oluşan beyaz orta sınıf değerlere karşı olan duruşu göz ardı edilemez. Aksine, bu kişilerin aşırı milliyetçilik, ırkçılık, homofobi karşısındaki ve savaş karşıtı tutumları İkinci Dünya Savaşı sonrasında ABD ve Sovyetler Birliği arasında ortaya çıkan soğuk savaş ve kapitalizmin yarattığı Red Scare, McCartyism, muhafaza politikası, tüketimciliğe karşı sert tepkilerin doğmasına ilham vermiştir. Bu kişilerin anti burjuva ve anti materyalist tutumları altmışlı yılların egemen beyaz orta sınıf kültürü karşıtlığı ve sivil haklar hareketinin temelini oluşturmuştur. Amerikan toplumunda mevcut siyah karşıtı önyargı ve ayrımcılığın sorgulanması biraz da onların çabalarıyla güçlenmiştir.

Beats otantik bir yaşam tarzı ve bireysel kimlik arayışındaydı. Bu çalışma özellikle Amerikan beyaz orta sınıf değerlerine alternatif olarak Beatlerin sanatları ve yaşam tarzlarıyla desteklediği bireysel, bohem ve hedonist tavrı da incelemektedir. Birinci bölüm, Beat kuşağının kökenini ortaya koymakta, ardından Beat edebiyatının eleştirel bir incelemesini içermektedir. İkinci bölüm, İkinci Dünya Savaşı sonrası Amerika'daki genel durumu özetleyip, savaş sonrası Amerika'nın sosyal ve politik durumuna bakmaktadır. Dönemin edebiyat akımları yine bu bölümde tartışılmaktadır. Üçüncü bölüm, Brossard'ın *Who Walk in Darkness* adlı eserindeki, beyaz orta sınıf değerlerine karşı öne çıkan marjinal yaşam tarzı ve bireyselliğe odaklanmaktadır. Dördüncü bölüm ise John Holmes'un *Go* adlı eserinde, tüketim toplumu karşısında hipsterizm ve hedonist yaşam tarzını irdelemektedir. Her iki eser daha otantik bir hayat tarzı arayışını temsil eder. Eserler karakterlerin beyaz orta sınıf değerlerini reddettikten sonra karşılaştıkları sorunları ele alır. Bunun sonucunda toplumdan dışlanır, ırkçı tacizlere maruz kalır, serseri ve marjinal muamelesi görürler. Karakterler Amerikan toplumundaki egemen tutum ve değerleri eleştirir, karşı çıkar ve yaşam tarzları

yüzünden sert bir şekilde yargılanır ve damgalanırlar. Her iki eser de Amerikan toplumunun ırkçı, kadın düşmanı ve homofobik davranışlar içeren, daha fazla sosyal ve ahlaki baskıya sebep olan, bireysel ifadenin bastırılmasına sebep olan beyaz orta sınıf tutumunu eleştirir. Romanlar sosyal baskının sebep olduğu boğucu atmosferi tanımlayıp kariyer odaklı, tüketimci ve konformist olmayı reddeden Beat hareketinin boş yere damgalanan aykırı tavrını ortaya koyar. Ayrıca İkinci Dünya Savaşı sonrasında fiilen ırksal, etnik ve cinsiyet hatlarıyla bölünen ve büyük homojen bir bütüne indirgenmesi imkansız olan Amerikan toplumunun çelişki ve çatışmaları hakkında bize fikir verir.

Asi ve direnen ruh, orta sınıfın düzenli üyelerinden olmaktansa alternatif yollar keşfedip çeşitli deneyimler kazanmayı tercih eden Beat'ler gibi alt kültürün enerjik bir sahnesi olarak ortaya çıkarmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Beat kuşağı, Marjinal grup, Otantik benlik, Bohem yaşam, Hipsterizm, Hedonizm.



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**ABSTRACT**

This study investigates the Beat generation as a marginal social group of the Post WWII America and looks at Chandler Brossard's *Who Walk in Darkness* and John Clellon Holmes's *Go* as the major works of the Beat movement which has had a significant impact on the American culture and society. The cultural and social legacy of the Beatniks can be traced to the sixties counterculture, hippies, anti-war movements, and even the civil rights movement. Their literary impact has been even more significant. The poets such as Allen Ginsberg and Lawrence Ferlinghetti and the novelists such as Jack Kerouac provided American literature with a fresh and original perspective, also making remarkable contributions in terms of form and style. The reason why I chose to study the Beat literature is the dissident attitudes of its writers and poets and the way they created a unique dissident culture. Their importance in terms of challenging the mainstream values of the post-war American society cannot be overlooked even if we view the modern American literature from a very broad perspective. Their critical stance with regard to the social and political issues concerning America can even be applied to today's global crises, affecting the societies all over the world. The Beats were not an isolated group of people who rejected to be involved in the current social political issues of their country.

On the contrary, their anti-establishment and anti-war attitudes inspired the critical responses toward the Cold War between the US and The Soviet Union that emerged after the Second World War, the Red Scare, McCarthyism, policy of containment, conformity, consumerism created and supported by capitalism. Their anti-bourgeois and anti-materialistic attitudes provided a basis for the sixties counterculture and civil rights movement, and more importantly, they questioned the prejudices and discrimination against people on racial, ethnic, and ideological bases existing in the American society. The Beats' search for an authentic form of life and a personal identity outside the mainstream is brought under scrutiny. This study specifically deals with the themes of individualism and bohemian and hedonist lifestyle as an alternative to the American conformity and the white middle class values. The first section contains a review of the origins of the Beat Generation and is followed by a critical examination of it. The second chapter examines the general context of the post WWII America and views the post war America from the social and political aspects. The social and literary aspects of the same era are also discussed. The third chapter focuses on marginality and individuality vs. the mainstream White Middle Class Values in Brossard's *Who Walk in Darkness*, while chapter four debates hipsterism and hedonism vs. consumerism and conformity in John Holmes's *Go*. Both works are significant for portraying a search for a more authentic lifestyle. They show the harsh consequences the characters are faced with after rejecting the mainstream white middle class values.

One such consequence is being treated as outcasts and being marginalized. The characters cannot be integrated to the American society and because of their lifestyles they are judged harshly and stigmatized. So, both works deal with the judgmental attitudes of the white middle-class American society, which include racist, misogynist, and homophobic behaviors and which turn into heavier social and moral pressures, causing suppression of individual expression. The novels describe the suffocating atmosphere caused by social pressures and stigmatizing attitudes that frustrate the Beats who reject being mainstream career-oriented, consumerist conformists and give us an idea about how the American society after the WWII has been actually divided by the racial, ethnic, and sexual lines and how it is impossible to reduce it into one large homogeneous whole. The rebellious spirit reveals itself in the form of an energetic scene of subcultures such as the Beats that prefer to explore alternative ways of being and to acquire a variety of experiences rather than becoming regular members of the mainstream middle-class.

**Keywords:** *The Beat generation, Marginal group, Counterculture, Authentic form of life, Bohemianism, Hipsterism, Hedonism*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Beat generation is a sub-cultural movement which appeared in the post-WWII period. Historically and socio logically speaking, it is the extension and continuation of the Bohemian post-World War II culture in the United States of America. The Beats dissented bourgeois culture; the culture that they named as 'squares', which the previous Bohemians used to call 'philistines' or 'bourgeois'. The Bohemians, as the ideological background of the Beats, are a group of artists and writers living an extraordinary life isolated from the middle and upper middle-class white Anglo-Saxons. The Bohemian culture is characterized by group dynamic Bohemians from different ethnic, racial and cultural backgrounds who shared common features such as alienation in the American society. That means stands for "the sense of separation and place-bound estrangement from mainstream society; activism in the form of speed sudden spasms of energy and information, mixed and flowing amorphously" (Elteren, 1952, p. 72).

The Beat Generation was frequently linked to Existentialism, the movement that flourished in Europe, as both were driven by a similar intellectual energy, anxiety and sense of alienation. Moreover, both rejected society and insisted on the notion that the individual had to define himself and his reality only through his own choice. The Beats can also be linked to the Existentialists in two other senses; first, through their suspicion that logical structures like science or pure rationality can cover neither the whole range of reality nor the meaningful experience. They believed that reason can turn into a form of totalitarianism and conservatism. Secondly, through their experience of anxiety and search for authenticity, the Beats were also remarkably harmonious with the mainstream existentialism. They both shared a common belief about the rottenness of the Western civilization. They thought that "rottenness consists of the dehumanization of modern man by the inhuman growth of institutions, the pressures for external conformity and a collective refusal to examine the self" (Burdick, 1959, p. 554).

## 1.1 The Beats' Political Attitudes

The attitudes of the Beats were shaped by the harsh conditions and gloom that followed the Second World War; the circumstances under which the Beat members were brought up. The fantasy and horror of a potential nuclear engagement with the Soviets inhabited their mind since childhood as a result of the Cold War. They spent their teenage years in a chaotic world. The unpleasant circumstance of the Cold War affected them in a way that they expressed their thirst for freedom and their sense of curiosity by adopting a lifestyle characterized by rebellion against the mainstream society and the world. In order to escape the depressing conditions of life, the Beats decided to create a special world, where they could enjoy an authentic moment away of the frustrating reality of the postwar America. To accomplish this, they adopted a bohemian lifestyle which is characterized by freedom of thought, Hipsterism, sexual promiscuity, drug use and alcohol, and a Bohemian lifestyle. The members of the Beat Generation had the lust for individuality, independent mind, and the rejection of collectivity.

Burdick (1959) says that the Beat Generation is often viewed as apolitical, apathetic, selfish, and borne out of the post-WWII era of prosperity. They are viewed as rich kids who chose a bohemian lifestyle as a matter of fashion, as part of a teenage rebellion, and inspired too many imitators, and eventually transforming into the beatniks and hippies of the fifties and sixties. (Burdick 1959) declares that the Beats are never viewed as coming out of World War II. They are the next generation, the post-war generation. For them, it was all supposedly history. Although the core of the Beat group – Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg and William S. Burroughs – met during the war. The Beats had not gone to war and they had not even considered it worth mentioning in their writing. The Beats weren't about the past; they wanted to define the future. To them, the war was this dumb foolish thing humans had done to each other, and it had no real reason. But the future had come, the war was over, and it was time to look to the future. How do we make a world that doesn't have giant wars and holocausts? That was their concern, making a new world. However some of the founders of the Beat Generation (members of the first generation of the Beats), such as Kerouac, Ginsberg, Carl Solomon, Gary Snyder, Herbert Huncke, and Bob

Kaufman all served in the Merchant Marine, which although is not a fighting unit, certainly made a massive and dangerous contribution to the war effort. They concluded their military service with the idea that 'war sucks'. Later, the Beats would become somewhat associated with the anti-war movement. By the time the Vietnam War was being protested, it was twenty years since they were hanging around Columbia University, talking about the New Vision, and they were scattered through the country, and associating with new movements. Ginsberg was leading the transformation of youth from beatnik to hippie while Burroughs was trying to rile up the youth in order to resist the controlling systems.

Most definitions seem to remove politics from the Beats' interest, sidelining it as an concern of a few Beat writers, like Ginsberg, William S. Burroughs, and to some extend Jack Kerouac, who only became politically interested in the years after the Beats ceased to exist as a literary or cultural movement, when the predominate countercultural force of the day was a more political and activist movement to which they aligned themselves partly to stay relevant. But perhaps it is time to examine just how the war shaped their lives and influenced their craft.

William S. Burroughs was born in February 1914, making him the only member of the Beat Generation to have lived through both World Wars. In 1944, World War II came to an end as the United States dropped atomic bombs over Japanese cities, targeting civilians and threatening to continue along this route unless Japan surrendered. While the rest of the country celebrated the victory, Burroughs was horrified by the loss of life. For Burroughs, nuclear weaponry was far worse than conventional bombs, and not just in terms of the number of potential dead. He states that the problem with the atom bomb is that its temperature is so high that it's a "killer of souls" So human beings have arrived at a situation where they can be the killer of souls (McCarthy, 2013, p. 3). In 1961, he told Allen Ginsberg the Cold War, to him, was not about America and the Soviet Union. But rather, they were allies, in the fight against humanity. It is a "pretext," he says, "to conceal and monopolize research confining knowledge to official agencies" Burroughs began thinking about war on a greater scale – it was no longer a matter of simple territory or loss of life, but a war into the mind (McCarthy, 2013, p. 5).

In 1942, Jack Kerouac was twenty-two years old and feeling both the urge to serve his country and support his family. He enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps and explained his feelings in a letter to a girlfriend:

For one thing, I wish to take part in the war, not because I want to kill anyone, but for a reason directly opposed to killing—the Brotherhood. To be with my American brother, for that matter, my Russian brothers; for their danger to be my danger; to speak to them quietly, perhaps at dawn, in Arctic mists; to know them, and for them to know myself. . . I want to return to college with a feeling that I am a brother of the earth, to know that I am not snug and smug in my little universe. (Wills, 2014, p. 21)

However, Kerouac very quickly had a change of heart and decided, instead, to sign up for the Merchant Marine. He had recently met a Merchant Mariner called George Murray, who had given Kerouac a copy of Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, and explained the pay and benefits that came of traveling the dangerous Atlantic waters. Before Kerouac had even shipped out, the German Navy had launched a devastating campaign against the Merchant Marine and their Navy escorts, attempting to stop the Allied forces from getting support to Western Europe (Wills, 2014).

According to (Theodor 2000), when the American writer Carl Solomon was asked about why so many of the Beats joined the Merchant Marine, Carl offered the most simple explanation that it was because of movies like *Action in the North Atlantic*, which romanticized the experience. Kerouac's military experience was to prove a tremendous failure. After only ten days in boot camp, he was assessed as so unfit for the environment that he was relocated to a military hospital for further examination. The last straw had been when he threw down his gun and refused to handle something obviously designed to kill human beings. His files show that he was considered abnormal, and that a neuropsychiatric examination disclosed auditory hallucinations, ideas of reference and suicide, and a rambling, grandiose, philosophical manner. He was labeled as suffering from schizophrenia and further hospitalized.

(Dittman 2004) reveals that during WWII Kerouac had been torn between his mother's pro-war sentiment and his father's opposing views. In the end, despite the hold his mother had over him, Kerouac remained fairly anti-war for the duration of WWII, and

lamented the senseless killing of men and women. This set him apart in a patriotic country determined to win the war, where pacifism was a dirty word. During the Korean War, he was also uncertain: “I believe in the people of America, but I can’t get patriotic about fighting in Korea because I don’t see why we went there in the first place” (Dittman, 2004, p.33). He later explained in a letter to Stella Sampas that he was steadfastly anti-war. Talking of her brother – and Kerouac’s close friend – he wrote: “Ah I wish Sammy had lived – what a great man he would have been – Wars don’t advance mankind except materially – The loss of people like Sammy... makes the earth bleed” (Dittman, 2004, p.34).

(Waldman 1991) discusses that Ginsberg's political activities were called strongly libertarian in nature, echoing his poetic preference for individual expression over the traditional structure. In the mid-1960s, he was closely associated with the counterculture and antiwar movements. He created and advocated 'flower power', a strategy in which anti-war demonstrators would promote positive values like peace and love to dramatize their opposition to the death and destruction caused by the Vietnam War. The use of flowers, bells, smiles, and mantras (sacred chants) became common among demonstrators for some time. In 1967, Ginsberg was an organizer of the 'Gathering of the Tribes for a Human Be-In', an event modeled after the Hindu Mela, a religious festival. It was the first of the countercultural festivals and served as an inspiration for hundreds of others. In 1969, when some antiwar activists staged an “exorcism of the Pentagon”, Ginsberg composed the mantra they chanted. He testified for the defense in the Chicago Seven Conspiracy Trial, in which antiwar activists were charged with 'conspiracy to cross state lines to promote a riot'.

(Kohler, 1993) argues that sometimes Ginsberg's politics prompted the reaction from law-enforcement authorities. He was arrested at an antiwar demonstration in New York City in 1967 and tear-gassed at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in 1968. In 1972, he was jailed for demonstrating against then-President Richard Nixon at the Republican National Convention in Miami. In 1978, he and long-time companion Peter Orlovsky were arrested for sitting on train tracks in order to stop a trainload of radioactive waste coming from the Rocky Flats Nuclear Weapons Plant in Colorado. Ginsberg's political activities caused him problems in other countries as well. In 1965, he visited Cuba as a correspondent for *Evergreen Review*. After he

complained about the treatment of gays at the University of Havana, the government asked Ginsberg to leave the country. In the same year, the poet traveled to Czechoslovakia, where he was elected 'King of May' by thousands of Czech citizens. The next day the Czech government requested that he leave, ostensibly because he was sloppy and degenerate. Ginsberg attributes his expulsion to the Czech secret police being embarrassed by the acclaim given to 'a bearded American fairy dope poet'.

## **1.2 The Beat Generation as a Sub-culture**

When we investigate the birth of the Beat Generation, we have to stop at the year 1945, when America tolerated the wartime, and eventually rose as a superpower almost unharmed from the conflict that devastated Europe. It managed to maintain control over its own people and America's major opponent, the Soviet Union. This reaction to potential external threats has been known as the policy of containment that is to put an end to the expansion or influence of the communist ideology, by creating strategic alliances in areas of conflict. This was joined with the so-called the 'culture of containment'. The US administration in that time took advantage of media, business, and the religious institutions to form a society that meets the goal of keeping the state powerful, and to make people believe that they were finally benefiting after years of distress. Although America displaced the war industry with the production of consumer goods, people still felt like their life was meaningless. As an attempt to create a new way of living in the postwar America, parallel to the efforts of developing new ideological, social, and economic environments, the farmlands were dramatically changed into suburban housings. This development contributed in the creation of the so-called 'the culture of consumerism'. After years of suffering the war and its negative outcomes, Veterans were able to make use of the GI Bill, to make families and to own houses. Living in the suburbs represented wealth, success and the realization of the 'American Dream'. The establishment of an average white middle-class family equipped with all house appliances, which lived in the American suburbs in the 1950s, symbolized the development of the postwar culture in America. However, not all the Americans were included with the positive changes. While most of the whites were lucky enough to leave the slum ghettos of the city, seeking a new way of life supported by the GI Bill, the racial, ethnic, and the religious minorities such as Jews, Catholics were left behind. In case members of those minorities were capable of affording buying



houses in the new suburbs, they were prevented from home ownership and they were not welcomed by the White neighbors.

Changes in the social, cultural and physical landscape of postwar America were not welcomed by all Americans. Refusal of the new lifestyle was not exclusive to those who were excluded from it. Actually, many among the white middle class began to raise questions about the suburbs and what they represented, and the way these changes might influence the American life. It was obvious that providing loans and mortgages to those who preferred the suburban areas by the government and the banking companies caused the decline of the city-centers. The investments in transportation services that favored the suburbs resulted in the fall of the city as a central point of life. This is what gathered a group of Americans together to form a culture of diverse ethnic and racial background but keep their racial and ethnic identities. Its members shared the sense of rejection of the so-called the 'American Dream' and the mainstream norms which were created by the above-mentioned factors. Many intellectuals like those who established the Beat generation, questioned all aspects of this new culture of consumption, putting emphasis on literature, class, gender and race as well as the general sense. Thus, containment as a cultural figure remained just a discourse instead of an actually accomplished hegemony. Because, the minorities were neglected in the process many whites were not convinced with it, especially such intellectuals as the Beats and their companions, who were a part of this postwar discourse of questioning. The writers of the Beat Generation used space as a way of challenging the central discourses of American culture of the fifties and the cold war era. The Beats aimed at establishing a cultural entity that exists between the middle-class in the suburbs and cities in a hand, and those marginal districts of the city often populated by low-income people who were unable to move to the suburbs on the other hand; for instance, the working class, blacks, ethnic minorities, criminals as well as lesbians and gays. The Beats tried to form a culture within the large scale of the preexisting culture where they anticipated living with a minimum of inconvenience by the white middle class. They mostly lived in spaces abandoned by the white middle class and turned to margins of urban society. By limiting contact with the white community, the Beats wanted to represent a more authentic way of living to engage with other groups instead. But then again, the Beats were not completely accepted by those marginal societies. They were viewed with suspicion, and they were regarded as outsiders. The Beats'

attempt to mingle in those marginal societies was often met with rejection and even violence occasionally. They were a small integrated group, assembled in New York City in 1944. Its members were Jack Kerouac, William Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg and Lucien Carr. The term 'Beat' was coined by the most celebrated member of the Beat Generation, Jack Kerouac. It "Implies the feeling of having been used, of being raw and it has several relevant connotations. In a musical sense, the word 'beat' suggests keeping the beat, harmony with others. More specifically, it implies the jazz beat" (Gray, 2004, p. 641). In the sociological and psychological sense, it stands for the condition of the stranger, a person who is alienated and restrained; the one who criticizes the values and disciplines of society. "It involves a sort of nakedness of mind and ultimately of the soul; a feeling of being reduced to the bedrock of consciousness" (Holmes, 1952, p. 2). Then by 1946, other members like John Clellon Holmes joined this marginalized bunch of writers and cultural protesters. Over the next five years, until 1951 or 1952, the Beats formed a marginal group, searching for meaning where previously none had been found. This is the period where Kerouac and Holmes both gathered the research for their novels and began writing them. The years between 1950 and 1952 were important for the publication of Kerouac's first novel, *The Town and the City*, and the publication of Holmes' novel, *Go*. Both works delineate the parameters of the culture and ideals of what Holmes would term as 'the Beat Generation.' However, this is also where the first chronological issues arise. When Holmes wrote his defining article *This is the Beat Generation (1952)*, the characters described in the article were dramatically different than the ones in his novel, published the same year. The Beat Generation made a permanent influence on the structure of modern American society. Allen Ginsberg's *Howl* dramatically expanded the notion of what was acceptable in literature. By paying attention to issues like personal freedom and self-expression, it challenged the censorship which functioned as a force which maintained control over the public discourse. Besides, the Beats curved up a very important subject when they pushed the discussions of environmentalism and ecology into the mainstream. Before that time, environmentalism, as we understand today, did not really exist. Playwright, Poet, novelist, and essayist, Michael McClure shares these concerns with several other members of the Beat Generation. More often, McClure's approach to nature and environmentalism is different from that of the seventh century Buddhism and the nineteenth century Romanticism. Instead, McClure approaches it in a scientific way that is based on biological and ecological disciplines.

He depends on the scientific disciplines as a means of discussing environmental problems and the importance of reconnection with nature. His ultimate goal is the 'recovery' of what he refers to as 'the biological self'.

Hipsterism, a common characteristic of the Beats, with its opposition to the predominant puritanical morality and white class mainstream values, can be defined as a way of life embracing sexual freedom, a drug-related lifestyle, fashion, and music. Their significant practices and attitudes like new dress codes, Jazz Music, drug abuse, the emphasis on sexual freedom and the like have been made a unique model, a behavior form and pattern that allowed the Beats to relate to wider social and cultural practices than just an artistic one. By doing so, they tried to create a special world outside the mainstream; a world where they might enjoy the authentic moment of their lives.

### **1.3 Sex, Drugs, and Crime**

The Beats' early life, particularly between 1944 and 1956, was tough and intolerable. It has been referred to as the underground period because it was frequently characterized by violence, confusion, desperation and suffering among the early Beat group and their fellows. For instance, David Kammerer was killed by Lucian Carr. Neal Cassady, as well as Gregory Corso, were imprisoned and spent a considerable time in reform school. William Burroughs was addicted to drugs, so he lived in exile. Jack Kerouac pursued his separate life and was solitary. For all the difficulty that members of this group faced in life, they did not lose the desire and will for writing. Early works of the Beat appeared in the 1950s. Kerouac wrote *The Town and the City* (1950), Holmes wrote *Go* (1952), Chandler Brossard wrote *Who Walk in Darkness* and George Mandel wrote *Flee the Angry Strangers* (1952), likewise William S. Burroughs wrote *Junkie* (1953). The period between 1956-1962 was a time of constant success in the Beats' public life. It was referred to as 'the public period' for it witnessed the act of reading the Beats products at art galleries and coffeehouses mainly in New York and San Francisco. Allen Ginsberg's *Howl* and Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* in 1957 became nationally and even internationally acclaimed. Writers of the Beat Generation chose urban areas to live in such as New York and San Francisco, and in the bohemian neighborhoods like Greenwich Village, Columbia University, and Times Square. They

gathered in spaces such as clubs, cafés, and galleries. They frequently shared alternative spiritual and ideological beliefs, as well as unusual sexual and family values. Then, after years of rejection, they were finally successful in achieving a position in the public media. *New York Times Magazine*, published Holmes's *This is the Beat Generation* (1952), which first introduced the movement to the public. These novels attracted young people as they claimed individuality and personal liberty away of the predominant bourgeois routine. They suggested joy, pleasure, and a psychological relief attained by the weekend parties, sex, drugs, and rock and roll music. All these brought about a different atmosphere and hailed the birth of a subculture for the post-WWII youth. Despite the fact that the mass media offered a negative image to the public about the Beats, as they considered them as a threat to the capitalism's mass production, the group eventually attracted additional members. For the mass media unintentionally contributed to the increasing fame of the Beats' by drawing the attention towards this movement. The Beats kept inspiring the young generations of artists with their courage and directness.

#### **1.4 Critical Approach of the Beat Generation**

A comparison between the Beats with the post-WWI generation, which named itself 'Lost Generation' reveals that the members of the Lost Generation were very much alike. They viewed in a roadster, laughing in a hysteric way because nothing meant anything anymore to them. The term 'Lost Generation' belongs to Gertrude Stein. According to *A Moveable Feast*, which is a memoir by Ernest Hemingway, published after his death, claims that Stein heard the expression from a garage owner when he shouted at the young mechanic boy who failed to repair Stein's car. He tells the boy: "You are all a generation perdue" (Hemingway, 1964, p. 684). Some time later, Stein tells Hemingway the story, adding: "That is what you are. That's what you all are ... all of you young people who served in the war. You are a lost generation" (Mellow, 1991, p. 273). Here, she addresses the survivors of the First World War. The term 'Lost' stands for confusion, deviancy, and aimlessness. Members of the Lost Generation migrated to Europe, not knowing exactly whether they were looking for a better future or escaping from the gloomy past. Bottles of whiskey and attitudes of desperate recklessness and the like have been their symbols. T.S. Eliot's poem, *The Waste Land*,

signifies the sense of loss of the Lost Generation. The reader can feel that the coherence of things had gone. It was an image which expressed the spiritual predicament of the Lost Generation.

On the other hand, 'the wild boys' of the Beat Generation were not lost. Their surge, energy and temper and attitude, as well as their firm, determined faces tells everything about them and express them better than words may do. The Beat generation lacks that deprivation which made so many of the achievements of the Lost Generation heroic actions. Furthermore, weeping over the abandoned ideals, and the disapproving of what they might have been considered nonsense morals, which so obsessed the members of the Lost Generation, do not concern young people of the Beat. They take these things for granted. They were brought up in this breakdown, and no longer cared for the morals. "They drink to come down or to get high, their excursions into drugs or promiscuity comes out of curiosity, not disillusionment" (Holmes, 1952, p. 2). They are alienated and in search of meaning in life. Not many among the Beats would protest against their reality that they have ignored the future and excluded it from their lives. They do not feel they need the predominant social values in their lives, and their negligence for the social norms doesn't make them feel guilty; they rather care for the everyday life problems. They do not pay attention to the question what do they live for, but rather how to live. It is exactly at this point that the highly educated individuals like authors, writer, and ordinary people gathered by a common feeling and think about the social matters. They produced new literature and a sub-culture in an attempt to find a meaning for their lives outside the mainstream stereotypes.

The Beat Generation's aesthetic choices were criticized severely. The academic community described the Beats as anti-intellectual and rude. The mainstream America was concerned about their attitude towards sexuality and drug use. They considered it a deviancy. Politicians such as Senator Joseph McCarthy, who is known by hostility against the communists and other left-wing supporters, accused the Beats' of siding with Communism, and subsequently, for being a threat to the nation. Critics such as Lizabeth Cohen, A. Johnston, and Barbara Ehrenreich, argue that the Beats opposed the consumer culture of the American 1950s. But, their opposition to consumer culture lacked a clear ideology and thus resulted in "an unprincipled rebellious behavior" (Essif, 2012, p. 2), such as collecting speeding tickets while criticizing the capitalist

system which produces these fast cars. They continue their criticism by considering that the Beats sustained consumerism in spite of their opposition to the consumer culture of the middle class; they developed a Beat form of consumption. His *Partisan Review* article: *The Know-Nothing Bohemians* (1958,) is a rough critique of Ginsberg's *Howl*, and Kerouac's *The Subterranean*, and *On the Road*. The central idea of his criticism is that the Beats' adoption of spontaneity is an anti-intellectual behavior that leads to a primitiveness that can simply turn toward violence and mindlessness. He also states that there is a connection between the Beats and crime. Ginsberg responded to this criticism in an interview with *The Village Voice* in 1958. He says that Podhoretz went to the same school as Ginsberg, but Podhoretz is the kind of intellectual who is just out of touch with the twentieth-century, and that he writes for the eighteenth-century mind. Adding that the Beats created what he calls a 'personal literature' by that time. The Beat Generation seems to have become one of the most prominent literary movements in contemporary American culture. Although criticized and ignored by contemporary critics and scholars. Time has proven that its influence goes beyond literature, reaching fields such as arts, society, and religion. The Beats gained readers generation after generation. They continued to inspire young generations of artists and musicians with their courage, directness, spirit, and energy. Perhaps The Beatles is the most famous music band that was inspired by the Beats. Today, the Beats are acknowledged as icons of America's counterculture. The Beats' spirit is experiencing a big revival all around the world in terms of enthusiasm for a free life.

Nowadays, the frustrations and concerns caused by the modern age lead people to a search for meaning or at least for means of distraction. As for the Americans, driving a car towards the West Coast represents an attractive idea for the youths who wish to search for fun. The Beat generation embodies the spirit of youth and rebellions, and more significantly, the spirit of freedom. People feel the desire to experience freedom like the protagonist of Kerouac's *On the Road*.

## **2. The Cultural Aspects of the Post-World War II America**

The post-WWII period in the United States was characterized by swift economic, political, social as well as literary changes. Those changes were vast and diverse at the same time. According to Life magazine, life in America was noticeably flourished after the WWII. After that America and its allies won the war, the USA subsequently arose as the leader of the world. The country's economy was booming. Universities began to fill with veterans who were taking advantage of the G.I. Bill, a law that offered a series of benefits for the returning veterans of the WWII. It proposed low-interest loans for those who wished to start a project, as well as low-cost mortgages and cash payments of schooling and living costs. Moreover, it included one year of unemployment compensation (Gray 2004).

The result of the American involvement in the WWII was an improvement in its economy. Americans concluded the decades of the 1930s upset with domestic issues, as the economy, unemployment and the need to treat the ideological divisions. By the end of the Second World War, however, that mood had changed. Gray (2004, p. 553) says that the United States of America had become a global superpower, committed to the international field. In the post-World War II era, capitalism, and the open market challenged the Soviet or communist collectivism and the organized economy. The military industry started to reduction the production of military equipment. However, the conflict mitigation did not permanently cease the arms production. The next decade witnessed the invention of different and more powerful weapons. Parallel to that, construction was flourished. People who were suddenly and unexpectedly liberated from the repression of the war started to demand the consumer durable goods of the recent mass society such as televisions, refrigerators, and cars.

The only nation to emerge after the war with a strong industrialized stand and a powerful economy is America. It presented itself to the rest of the world as well as to Europe as an economic phenomenon. According to (Gray 2004), in 1949, the per capita

income of the United States was twice that of Britain, three times that of France, five times that of Germany, seven times that of Russia. It had only 6 percent of the world's population: yet it consumed 40 percent of the world's energy, 60 percent of its automobiles, 80 percent its refrigerators and nearly 100 percent of its televisions. This is what Richard calls the 'society of abundance'. America transcribed its perspective of the modern culture into its European allies and to other parts of the world, where it claimed the right of interference and control. During the period between the 1940s into 1950s, the US Administration attempted to form a specific style in every aspect of life, from art to popular culture.

(Gair 2008) explains that President Eisenhower (1952 – 1960), was interested in maintaining the economic abundance, and cultural hegemony through the strategy of the mass inertia and inactivity. The discourse of Eisenhower was represented by giving the citizens the choice in managing their business, and he claimed that the state must not interfere in the daily life of the individual. Beyond everything, starting a family was no longer a difficult process. Because, the economic condition of most of the Americans was enhanced. It was an age when after several decades of crisis, people finally became able to enjoy the fruits of their labor and, take advantage of the natural resources of the homeland without any fright that one day, those resources might run out. At that time, domestic changes started to take place. The Americans were finally able to make use of the booming. Many among them started to move over from the small towns or cities to the suburbs to buy newly built houses. The reason behind this migration was buying cheaper houses. People became more optimistic about their future; families started to have babies, having resulted in an increase in the birth rate. All the above-mentioned developments have changed America into a worth living place in the eyes of many. At least that is how America seemed to be at the very beginning, very optimistic and hopeful. It appeared in an image which supported the 'American Dream' from the mainstream's perspective of the term—that is the material wealth.

Nevertheless, if we take a closer look at the political field, the economic condition, and the social system, we will discover that people began to lose their optimistic view about the future. The image of America as a worthy living place was eventually crushed by people's realization of the political and social systems' disintegration;



Particularly, after some shocking events that occurred, following the end of WWII; events, such as the emergence of the nuclear Bomb, political assassinations, the outbreak of the Cold War, and the Vietnam War. All the mentioned events led to the rise of the Civil Rights, the Anti- War movements and the counterculture of the following years.

During the mid-1940s, America was a place of tremendous cultural and political transition. The Great Depression, shaped the childhoods of most of the Beats. Then, it was followed by the American participation in the Second World War. Later, other dramatic events subsequently happened; for example, the atomic assault on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. Nationally, the post-war era was marked by vast developments in the economic conditions. Generations of the next decades invented a new form of youth culture. They re-adopted the culture of consumption of the 1920s. They produced a standard form of a family life. They believed in the notion that the American nation was heading for a golden age when luxury and comfort are offered by science. Within the general outlook of the economic prosperity, there are several points that stand out. First, it is important to stress the links between the technological and ideological mechanism of cultural change. With post-war wealth, many Americans had the access to the new technological inventions. They were also able to move to large suburban homes, where they copied a lifestyle that was unachievable during the Depression era. Meanwhile, some sociologists observed threats to the sense of social unity. TV shows were distinctly determined by the need to satisfy the trading companies. The viewer choice was strictly limited. Large numbers of Americans were watching the same TV shows and discussing them at work or school the next day. This de facto contributed to a sense of a social unity that allowed the corporate governance to maintain a form of censorship over the citizens.

At the time when the Cold War reached its climax, The US Administration felt the need to promise material success to loyal American citizens, in order to tell its own citizens and the rest of the world that the Americans have had the superiority over the Soviets. While there were a lot of Americans who were excluded from the suburban prosperity, most notably African Americans. The sociologist Charles Wright Mills, says that the power elite was responsible for deciding what pattern of nation does America need at the time of the Cold War, and then they were able to form the notion

and represent it on television programs and the movies. On the other hand, contrary to the economic rewards for loyalty to the American cold war policy, there was extremism and intolerance towards any suspicion of political dissidence. Most strikingly, Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin led a campaign of threat. He accused hundreds of Americans with real or unproven ties to communism. (SPSI), (HUAC), as well as the (FBI), under the leadership of anti-communist and anti-beatnik, J. Edgar Hoover, all involved in irritating not only politicians but also anyone in media and the arts who was suspected of being left-leaning. Stephen Vaughn has noted, for instance, “the virtual impossibility of bringing an openly anti-capitalist picture to the screen” (Gair, 2008, p. 13). The studio system rejected writers who offered true representations of the reality. Even when such movies were made, their distributions were frustrating. For example, Herbert Biberman's *Salt of the Earth* (1954), was a sympathetic movie, that portrayed the working class life in America. It was forbidden. In addition to that, Biberman was imprisoned following the (HUAC) investigation. However, the movie won many awards in Europe; it only had a proper national distribution in 1965. Hoover acknowledged the Beats as a threat to the American society. Even though, many Beat members including Jack Kerouac, were socially conservatives who chose to live outside the dominant trend, rather than having the intention to convert it (Yannella 2011).

According to Harvey (1993), women in the fifties were expected to fulfill contradictory roles and had limited economic and material power. For women, the postwar era represented a dramatic retreat from the trends of previous decades. From the twenties through World War II, women had been steadily expanding their sphere by going to college and going to work in growing numbers. The war years brought huge numbers of women into the workforce doing jobs that had been previously open only to men. It was a turbulent time when everyone's life seemed to change practically overnight. This broadening of opportunity under the banner of necessity was seen as temporary. After the war, these changes were not so easily rolled back.

New, persuasive roles were imagined for women. ‘Insecurity’ and ‘self-doubt’ were women's buzzwords. They worried about not being clean enough, or womanly enough, about not finding husbands, about not being good enough mothers. They were afraid of getting pregnant. They made their life decisions on the basis of safety and security.

At the same time, women were experiencing a broadening of opportunity and increase in potential roles in society. A few middle-class women began to think about the nature of their own educations – the source of their strengths, the reasons they accomplished less if in fact they did, and the way accomplishment an achievement had been constantly defined by men. “On the surface the 1950s seemed to suggest a decade of glorification of motherhood, but in fact mothering was so denigrated that women who gave their serious energies to it for any period of time were considered unfit to do anything else” (Kaledin, 1984, p.48).

Perhaps the experience during the war could be reconfigured by having women relegated to more menial jobs, but the spirit of individual accomplishment was always just under the surface. Many married workers realized that they must be quite capable of holding down two jobs at once. “Being paid for what they were doing – even if the pay was less than men were taking home, in a society dedicated to the cash nexus – could only enhance self-esteem” (Kaledin, 1984, p.66). Self-assurance built up on the job managed often to overcome nagging doubts about whether their children would suffer. The paychecks women took home not only gave them a sense of security but also helped sustain a sense of independence in a legal establishment that in some places still saw women archaically as their husband’s property.

The position of women after the war was characterized by such contradiction. Activities such as holding down a regular job provided both liberation and concern. For instant, frustration over appearances and the appropriate role for women expressed itself in many ways during the fifties. Breines (1983) declares that disaffected teenage girls longed for something significant in their lives. ‘Authentic,’ ‘genuine,’ and ‘real’ were words used repeatedly. The 1950s did not provide them with a sense of being real. They felt that being sheltered, virginal, and female for middle-class white girls precluded the experience of meaningfulness. The sense that the culture was rife with hypocrisy, everyone keeping up appearances in one form or another, generated a yearning for genuine feeling. In the 1950s, women were expected to be mothers. “In fact, motherhood couldn’t really be described as a ‘choice’ in the fifties. For one thing, the ideology that equated womanhood and motherhood were powerful and ubiquitous” (Harvey, 1993, p. 89). According to Ketterer (1999), describing motherhood as a “drift,” many women found themselves as mothers without much critical thought to

the role. But, much like many other positions for women in the fifties, motherhood is marked with ambivalence. Motherhood can be experienced as a powerful and creative act and in the fifties; powerful and creative acts were hard for women to come by. The project of rearing children was touted as the ultimate challenge to women's skill, resourcefulness, organization, and even scientific talents.

Compared to what awaited her in the job market, motherhood presented itself as an alluring career with a pleasant working condition, opportunities for creativity, and good job security. The ambivalence arrives at the point where women are seen as the expert and sole individual responsible for the child's well-being. This often came with the contradictory viewpoint that the mother is to blame for any problems the child might have. Women had virtually no real economic power, despite the advertising industry's attempts to set them up as purchasing decision-makers in the home. According to Strasser (1982), this limitation of power through an apparent specialization and unique "empowerment" of women extended from sewing to cooking to the cleaning of the home. Ultimately, the 1950s found women in the position of "home economist," the target of advertising and decision making, but only within the limited sphere of the grocery list or the kitchen needs. The advertisers attempted to attract whoever did the deciding. Although their ultimate decision to advertise most products to the woman consumer undoubtedly bolstered the development of the consumer role, creating that role and establishing a new function for the household in the world of mass production and mass distribution was, for them, a means to their clients' financial ends. The home economists, on the other hand, consciously created and defined a place in the new economic order of the private home and for the married women who stayed in it. Jamieson (1995) says that the combination of restriction and ultimate authority, plus the mixed messages of the decision maker and obedience placed the fifties woman in the situation best described by Kathleen Hall Jamison as the 'double bind'.

Brown Helen's *Sex and the Single Girl* (1962) offered a radical discourse far away from motherhood, suggesting how and why a girl should remain single and work to please all men by being 'the Girl'. Liberation for women from the confines of marriage and homemaker was cast as perpetual servitude to men as a category. Such seemingly

liberatory discourses that offer an escape from the ambivalence of motherhood offer nothing more than another role in the service of men, yet with hints of potential power.

## **2. 1 The Political Aspects**

During the WWII, many countries fell under the control of dictatorships. Japan, for instance, dominated the East Asia and the Pacific. Nazi Germany headed for West Europe, and Russia. Fascists of Italy threatened invasions. Before all of this had happened, the American Congress had legislated Neutrality Acts in the 1930s. The law was set to isolate the USA, and keep it of any kind of involvements in wars after the World War I. In order to avoid involvements in any war that had no direct impact on the American nation, the diplomatic policy of America stuck to the idea of sidestepping military alliances with other countries. The policy also concentrated on reducing the diplomatic affairs with other countries, to avoid unfavorable conflicts. However, by the German invasion of Poland in 1939, this policy was ended. The Anti-Nazi feeling was growing.

During the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt (1933-1945), United States started to support its European Allies by sending armaments, and financial supports. Japan tried to reduce the American hegemony and power in the Pacific by the famous attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. This event urged America to enter the war (Yannella 2011).

In general, the outcomes of WWII, and its sad memories had a very negative influence on mankind as the whole and on the America as well. There were unreasonable Mass deaths. (Yannella 2011) declares that there were 22 to 25 million military deaths all around the world. Nearly, 9 million Soviet soldiers, 5.5 million Germans, 4 million Chinese, and 2 million Japanese, and almost 4,000 American soldiers were killed. In addition to that, approximately, 35 million civilians were reported as death all over the world. Among them, were 13 million Soviet citizens, 14 million Chinese, 3 million Indonesians, 2 million Poles, and 2.5 million Germans, and around 1,500 American civilians died. Probably, the cruelest genocide took place during the WWII, was the notorious Holocaust; in which 6 million Jews were killed either burned or as a result of a deliberate starvation. It was estimated that during the Japanese's invasions of the Asian countries, about 25 million civilians were killed. In 1945, the US air force

started to firebomb Japanese cities. As a result, hundreds of thousands of civilians were killing. In the same year, America dropped atomic bombs on both the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It is said that Hiroshima bomb directly killed about 80,000 civilians, meanwhile, Nagasaki bomb killed about 70,000 people right away. The number of deaths was subsequently increased because of the serious injuries and the radiation effects. So, those frightening numbers continued to spin in the minds of Americans, especially veterans, as many among them started to see nightmares continuously.

It is stated in (Blair 1974) The feeling of victory by the Americans was shortly replaced by intolerable living conditions. The brutal attacks of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki outraged many Americans, as these most of the major newspapers started to publish the event as the headline of their first pages. This booming event raised discussions and unresolved questions about the need to use atomic bombs in the first place, and the possibility of using the nuclear power for peaceful aims instead. It made the Americans be suspicious about technology and the new source of power. They began to raise questions about their future and destiny. (Steinbeck 2008) displays such a psychological effect on people in his novel, *The Winter of Our Discontent*. Ethan, the central character of the novel, embodies the anxiety of the nuclear bomb and the feeling of mistrust against the government. He indicates that whenever an issue becomes too great, Man has the protection of ignoring it and not thinking about it. But, it will eventually go deep to his/her mind and gets mixed up with many other problems already there. In the result, it creates a feeling of restlessness and disorder that drives everyone to think about getting something before it is all gone. (Wittner 2009) declares that the atomic assault on the Japanese cities created a shock in the world. Hundreds of thousands of people came together by popular campaigns that raised slogans which claimed to save humanity from nuclear destruction after being informed of its catastrophic impacts.

The Protesting movements argued that nations do not have to create weapons of mass destruction to secure their interests. However, as soon as the WWII was over, the cold war was begun. It was an arms race between the two superpower countries, the USA and the Soviet Union. The conflict was an extension to the long-standing division between the two nations which was dated back to the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917.

Later, the conflict between the two was mitigated when they became allies during the WWII. Finally, when the war was over, the old differences once more came to existence.

The fear of Communism controlled the American policy in the 1950s. The Americans saw Communism as a threat to the American way of life. They defined it as “The destruction of democracy” (Layman, 1997, p. 184). Senator Joseph McCarthy led a campaign to hunt the individuals, who he doubted of having ties with the Communist Party. He often appeared on TV; warning people that Communists attempted to destroy the Americans nation. This anti- communist enthusiasm dramatically increased as a result of McCarthy's violation. He provoked the public opinion against the Communists; destroying the lives and careers of those who were public figures such as intellectuals, writers, even Hollywood stars.

Anderson (2005) states that the period of the 1960s, was the era of political assassinations. President John F. and two of the most prominent African-American revolutionaries Martin Luther King and Malcolm X were killed. The American people were completely optimistic about Kennedy. They were confident about his ability to find solutions for their problems, and that he would make their dreams come true. Therefore, his assassination let the people down and put an end to their hopes and ambitions. Then, Lyndon Johnson replaced Kennedy. In the book of *The Vietnam War*, he also, explains that President Johnson promised of the notion so-called Great Society, in which freedom and equal opportunities will be offered for all the Americans. Yet, he did not fulfill his promises. He, instead, continued the nightmare of the people. He financially supported the growing war in Vietnam that lasted for 30 years. It resulted in hundreds of thousands of people became victims of this war, beside the considerable cost of money. America entered the Vietnam War to limit the expansion of communists in Asia. It supported South Vietnam against the communists of the North, as they were fighting each other. The presidential candidate Richard Nixon promised to successfully conclude the war with satisfactory results. However, the term satisfactory results had different definitions among the Americans. For many, it meant the withdrawal of us troops from Vietnam. Yet, President Nixon kept the US military involvement for 4 more years. He wished to get the US forces out of Vietnam with honor; to preserve the American credibility. Later, in a similar way, President

Henry Kissinger linked the world peace to the United States' ability to end the war without losing its credibility and honor. Subsequently, the high number of casualties and reports on war crimes shocks the American public. For example, such reports which revealed that a large number of civilians were killed by the American officer Lt. William Calley in a Vietnamese village. Gitlin (1978) mentions that reports alike often were made by veterans about incidents of tortures and burning villages committed by the Marines, attached with reports about sexual abuse against women and children prisoners and civilians. All these shocking facts added more anger and mistrust against the US administration. Therefore, the anti-war movement and the Civil Rights' campaigns were established. The movement is one of the most famous antiwar movements of the twentieth-century US history. It consisted of people from middle-class suburbs, universities, and government institutions. After, 1965, it achieved national fame and became more powerful. It involved the racial, political and the cultural issues. The movement revealed deep divisions within 1960s American society. Hundreds of thousands demonstrated in San Francisco and Washington DC, protesting the Vietnam War.

(Wells 2011) maintains that during Johnson's term in office, this movement played an important role in limiting the war. During the Presidency of Richard Nixon, the movement stimulated the American troop withdrawals. It continued to condemn the war, raising the case of deterioration in the discipline and the morale of the U.S. army. They created greater pressure to the troop withdrawals. Moreover, it encouraged the congress to legislate a law that put an end to the U.S. funds for the war. According to Sage (1996), whoever protested against the random destruction and murders of Vietnam in the name of democracy was to be labeled as a communist proponent, and consequently an enemy of America. People in America became conscious about the real image of war. Besides that, many Americans started doubts about the military and intelligence, and they considered the political authority as irresponsible. In the article of, *The Battle of Harvard Square*, which is written by Bruce Schwartz, indicates that, five years of Vietnam War delayed the domestic reforms in terms of the fight against Poverty, police oppression of African Americans, and the hippies. He concludes his essay with the view that many young people believed that the American capitalist system was at the root of these domestic issues and that before they were eliminated, the system had to be changed.



The Americans expressed their concern about the War through public meetings, artistic performances, and mass demonstrations. Those protestors had lost their brothers, parents, and spouses. They adopted an anti-war standpoint and shared a mutual need for the creation of a counterculture. So, a subculture, which embodied a rebellious ideology, quickly spread among people. It offered an alternative lifestyle indicated by anti-war protest and personal liberty. Thus, these developments reduced the boundaries between the American individual and the rest of the world. Actually, the young generation of the post-WWII era was gradually exploring the world which seemed deferent and much more complex than what they previously used to know.

## **2.2 The Social Aspects**

Russell (2002) states that the foreign policy of the United States tended towards war in order to exploit the war for her strategic interests. It can be seen that throughout the post-WWII era, this policy led to many conflicts. Events which resulted in awful outcomes made the American society suffer. Thus, such a policy resulted in a sense of loss among the Americans. One of the most upsetting and dreadful moments the American people had been through was when the veterans came back home after WWII. They returned home safe, but they brought some bad habits with them. Some of them returned with drug abuse habit after that they had been wounded and given medicinal doses of morphine. They picked up some of those drugs and brought them home. In fact, many among those veterans were sent to the asylum for being dangerous on society. Their addiction made the American government think of finding a solution for those veterans because for them to stay within the society would have a destructive effect on American society.

As soon as World War II ended, the social fabric started to get weak, as “There was considerable expression of public concern about the lack of available housing for returning veterans, unemployment, high divorce rates, juvenile delinquency, and mental illness” (Yannella, 2012, p. 57). Juvenile delinquency – that is offenses against the law made by people less than 18 years old – had long been recognized as a serious problem and America's main discussed postwar subject. When the war was ending in 1945, there were extensive news stories of teenagers involved in street fights, gang

wars and murders as well as offenses like vandalism and shoplifting— stories that troubled the American society long after the WWII. For instance, Philip Yannella points at a report by the FBI. In the report, the statistics indicated that in 1945, crime in 2,000 cities had increased by 12.4 percent and, even more shocking, that 20 percent of people arrested were minors; the average age of the American criminal was now 17. He also maintains that children were not given proper discipline, and the authority of institutions such as the home, the church, the school and the law had become too careless and ineffective to play their constructive role in developing the American post-war society. They couldn't direct the society in the right way, and much worse they failed to keep the high human values as before.

In the most popular and influential book of the postwar era, *Growing Up Absurd* (1960), Paul Goodman argues that the deviants were righteous young boys and men “who made choices and invented ways of living that were infrequently charming, generally stupid, and regularly disastrous” (Goodman, 1956, p. 9). He is strictly arguing that there were deep social causes for deviant behavior; that the abundant American society was contemporarily lacking in many of the valuable and useful goals, as well as the most basic objective opportunities that would support growing up. It is lacking in sufficient man's work. It is lacking in authentic public speech, and that the people of America are not taken seriously. It lacks the opportunity to be beneficial. It frustrates aptitude and creates stupidity. It corrupts patriotism. It corrupts the fine arts. It limits science. “It dims the sense that there is a creation. It has no honor. It has no community” (Goodman, 1956, p. 12).

Articles appeared in magazines reported terrible and shocking stories regarding the decline of American society. According to (Yannella, 2012), on January 1947, *Newsweek* reported that some 840,000 preschool and school children suffered from neurotic behavior problems and that each year about 1,000 children under age 15 were sent to institutions for the insane; in addition to a January 1948 story reported that half the hospital beds in the nation were occupied by victims of mental disease; and a March 1955 article reported that one in twelve children would spend time in mental institutions. Similarly, in 1948 a conference under the name of *An International Congress on Mental Health* was assembled in London with the attendance of 37 nations. According to (Freeman 1984), the conference concluded that one-seventeenth of the nation was psychotic. They were either reserved in institutions or stayed there

for a limited time, and that one out of every ten people would spend some periods of his/her life in a mental institution. Moreover, two million men were rejected for having neuropsychiatric conditions that made them ineligible for jobs and duty. Mentally ill patients were treated in the worst ways that one could possibly imagine. They used to be treated by shock therapy, known as Electroconvulsive therapy. Yet, the worst treatment was prefrontal lobotomy, which involved a surgery of the cerebral cortex. Albert Deutsch, an outstanding postwar historian in his book of *The Shame of the States* (1948), tries to show the conditions of the mentally ill people and how badly they were treated. Deutsch (1948) indicates that he was reminded of the Nazi concentration camps at some places in Germany. Deutsch mentioned that he entered buildings crowded with naked humans herded like cattle and treated with no concern, and they had a stinky smell. Hundreds of those patients he maintains were living under leaking roofs, surrounded by decaying, moldy walls.

Shortly after the war was over, articles about mental illness began to appear in the press just like those of juvenile delinquency and continued sharply into the 1960s. Society began to ignore such problems as the booming economy began to pervade the entire country. In his book of *Screening the Beats: Media Culture and the Beat Sensibility* (2004), David Sterritt marks the fifties as “an era of number of qualities and imperatives beginning with the letter C: Consensus, Conformity, Conservation, Consumerism, and Cold War” (Sterritt, 2004, p. 1). American society wanted to update the old Victorian system: fathers made daily trips to big cities in quest of whatever power and money they can lay their hands on, mothers stayed in peaceful suburbs to look after the house and kids. Leisure days were times when everyone's labor is paid off at the end. Citizens, who chose not to adopt this pattern, or prove incapable of doing so, were odd, useless, or both.

(Blair 1974) indicates that in the year 1950 onward, America became a nation of corporations and conformists. Suburban neighborhoods were built. Corporate America enforced conformity in workers regarding their appearances as well as their attitudes. Mass media, including televisions and films, worked towards the creation of what many observed as emptiness, bare regular culture, where creativity and diversity were seldom endured. With the economic prosperity, America was developed to a vast suburban society. Almost all the empty spaces between the cities were increasingly filled with project houses. Eventually, those areas became compounds with their

inhabitants sharing the same interests, dressed in the same stylish fashions, earned the same incomes, and exchanged the same ideas. Even their houses seemed all alike. Parallel to these developments, the range of television broadcasting area was advanced. In 1952, television became the major and the dominant mass media. It became a defining part of American life. It is said that in the early fifties, young people watched TV more hours than they went to school. What was presented and portrayed on TV was accepted as normal by people, as they became eyewitnesses to events as never before. Even though they might have felt comfortable with their new way of lifestyle and they found a kind of rest and tranquility, but step by step their lives became pointless, as everyone was working and doing the same thing. They found themselves sunk into the vortex of conformity and bourgeois arrogance.

American historian and literary critic Lewis Mumford exposes the American suburb in his book, *The City in History* (1961):

A multiple of uniform, unidentifiable houses, lined up inflexibly, at uniform distances, on uniform roads, in a treeless communal waste, inhabited by people of the same class, the same income, the same age group, witnessing the same television performances, eating the same tasteless prefabricated foods, from the same freezers, conforming in every outward and inward respect to a common mold (Mumford. 1964, p. 129).

The outcome of that conformity was not so promising, especially for women. Life in the suburbs put the American woman in such a position of a bored, isolated, frustrated, and lonely housewife. The depressing environment of conformism excluded many women from the work world, to keep them in the narrow restricting circle of the suburban 1950's housewives. On the other hand, young couples so often needed a second income to maintain the standard lifestyle of the 1950s suburban. Stuart (1976) argues that social developments such as the acceptance of premarital sex, the increase of teen pregnancy as well as the consequent illegitimate childbirths among white females contributed to the rise in single parent households. Likewise, others started to live together without being married. Alongside this development, there were about 17,000 couples reported to be living together without marriage. America's vision of freedom according to Stuart (1976), relegates people to consumption, passivity, and spectatorship generating a model existence sharing signs of sickness. It increasingly

imposes regimented regulation and authoritarian control. (Galens & Spampinato 1998) debates that sickness of the American society contained habits such as rushed society. Everyone had to move and get elsewhere so fast, besides the race of making money. They made much money to spend it over useless things. That made the American personal of the late fifties a robot with no inner life. Otherwise, machines took over the complex jobs, resulting in a high rate of unemployed people in the automation era. The American Man was dehumanized and his intelligence was humiliated by replacing Man with a computer, which is errorless and much faster than humans.

(McNeese 2008) says that the American society seemed to be falling apart rapidly in the 1960s. As the nation witnessed a cultural revolution of the struggle for Civil Rights, which increased during the Cold War. The Civil Rights Movement (1955- 1968) was a response to racism and the segregation imposed on African-Americans. In fact, even a century after Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation

Proclamation on 1st January 1863 during the American Civil War, which resulted in the process of freeing 4 million slaves, black Americans still faced discrimination, their existence was characterized by poverty, misery, and racism. In the beginnings of the 1960s, the American government policy was keeping the blacks in low positions particularly in the South. The rate of unemployment among blacks was more than twice that of the whites.

At the time when the country was still enjoying the prosperity of the 1950s, the average white family earned \$6,500 annually, whilst a black family might expect to earn \$3,500, approximately half of what a white family could earn, which means suffering from economic crises. Racial discrimination during the early 1950s was always present in the daily life of the vast majority of blacks in the South. Segregation permeated the lives of Afro- Americans, to serve as a steady reminder that Southern law doesn't protect them, for they were treated as second-class citizens, facing discrimination in school, at work, on the street, in the grocery store, even in the hospital (McNeese 2008).

(Williams 2002) debates that the discrimination took various shapes. For example, black children were kept from attending good schools. Restaurants were allowed to

refuse black customers' service. Getting a hotel room after a long day of an exhausting trip, had also to be a challenge for a black man or family. In addition to that, playhouses and movie theaters were providing less for the price of the ticket, relegating black clients to the balcony, that if they allowed entrance at all. Public drinking spouts were not public to a city's or town's black inhabitants and visitors. As mentioned before, getting a restroom could be difficult for a black person, who had to find one whose door carried the sign: 'Coloreds Only'. Such reminders were almost at every corner for Southern blacks. Such things were as a daily reminder of the alignment that caused the Whites to view the blacks as inferiors.

(Williams 2002) also states that alongside private discriminations that one might experience individually, there was, however, one common discriminatory practice that blacks had been forced to experience in groups, on a daily basis. In Southern cities, public buses which many blacks had to rely on as transportation mean were segregated. Each time a black person decided to board a city bus; he/she was reminded that segregation was ever present. However the rules changed little from one city to another, indignity was ever constant. The city buses were a microcosm of this oppressive society. Black passengers, after paying their tickets at the front of the bus, had to leave and re-enter the bus through the back door. They were not allowed to sit except in the rear, yet they had to give up their seats whenever a white passenger was left standing. Day by day the image of black people standing together in the rear of crowded buses with the whites sitting comfortably right in front of them kept reminding them with the bitter reality of what it sounds like to be an ethnic minority in the American society.

(Williams 2002) argues that during the previous decades, there had always been persistent promises of a better future for America's black ethnicity. Yet, they achieved nothing other than practicing some lobbying efforts and calling for patience by the whites, who did not take any concrete steps on behalf of black equality or an improvement of black rights. The change was a promising dream always spoken of in the future tense. The minority had become tired of waiting. They were sick of being treated unequally and unjustly. So, they had become ready to take action. As a result, things got out of control; blacks had finally risen up to revolt against the ill treatment of the local whites.

(Lassonde 2002) makes it clear that in 1963, the most intense violation of the civil rights movement took place in the country. In 1963, Martin Luther King and other civil rights leaders organized huge demonstrations to confront segregation in the city of Birmingham, Alabama and Southern metropolis, the cities which experienced the most horrific confrontations, especially in a city like Birmingham; where racism was at the highest level. For instance, in a performance in Birmingham during 1956, Nat King Cole the famous black singer had got assaulted by whites and beaten up while performing on stage. After that police arrested many adult protesters in Birmingham, the Southern Christian Leadership Council started to send out thousands of Afro-American children to protest segregation. Here, a number of those children got rounded up and brutally attacked by the police of Birmingham. Time passed and other movements followed. Organization, like The Black Power Movement (1966-1975), aimed at the expansion of the Civil Rights' range. In the end, these were some of the most outstanding social events to show the unstable and rambling social atmosphere that the postwar II generation went through.

### **2.3 The Literary Aspects**

The revolutionary features of the post-WWII America go beyond the social and political changes to include the literary field as well. American literature displays the image of the country. The American literature in of the second half of the twentieth century was as diverse as the political and social scenes. In the period between 1945 and 1950, the literary representation of common national sense continued. In the period between 1945 and 1950, literature represented the common national sense, as there was a cultural homogeneity in the 1950s. In terms of patriots, writers gave the priority to the construction of the American society in such a way that it could resist Communism. Generally, literature offered the notion of a cultural conformity to a people that were united by the fear of the external threat caused by the war. Materialistically, they wrote to take benefits of the mass marketing in the consumer world that was created by the authority. Writers thought that a novel, a play, or a short story is a representation of the experiences of an entire people. The American literature of (1945-1960), set up the “representative American short story” (Bayam 2279) for the upper-middle-class readers. It was published in *The New Yorker magazine*. While subjects leaning to more homely interests were published in *The Saturday Evening Post magazine*.

Advertisements on fancy cars like Cadillac and Mercedes-Benz in were published on *The New Yorker*. While, ordinary cars which were bought by middle-class consumers were published in the Post and Collier's. Similarly, posters on homes' electric supplies appeared on the page opposite to a short story which begins with its character's sharing life in a modern electric house. This reality explains that there was a uniformed American lifestyle, especially for the middle and upper-middle class families. There were attempts to support the idea of cultural conformity among people. Weekly magazines and the medium were used to for the purpose of homogenization. Mainly television; comedies and serious drama made sure to show all the best features of the American life. During the 1960s, the culture conformity was declined. At the same time, the understanding of literature met serious challenges. The critical movements of the period formed a new literary mode, and writers started to respond to those critical movements with new literary strategies. The first development that appeared was 'The Death of the Novel'. Discussions made by some writers argued that social reality had become too unstable to serve as a reliable center of their narratives. They instead, followed chaos as an alternative to the so-called the cultural homogeneity. Because, they thought chaos was the reality of the American cultural scene. The technology which was supposed to serve cultural conformity--ironically functioned against such a trend. Because, global awareness was increased by television, and air traveling concealed the boundaries of time and space. Mainly, the unity of time, space, and action was no longer useful to provide a ground to build a literary work upon. As more about the world became discovered, the writer's ability to make sense of the whole was challenged. Producing inclusive terms seemed to be unachievable. As a result, writing in American shifted from sameness and homogeneity into chaos as a cultural fact. It also shifted because of the tragic events that took place in the Post-War II period, precisely during the 1960s, when America witnessed serious conflicts and violence.

Militarism, social discrimination, conformism, consumerism, technology, and materialism, all together shaped the Post-WWII America. Hence, the literary products were dramatically influenced by those historical events. Such an influence can be best noticed in the works of the Beat Generation, Black Arts. Such works portray the sense of human loss and disability during and after war time. *Hiroshima (1946)* is a novel by John Hersey. It portrays America's dropping off the atomic bomb on Japan. It



narrates the story of a number of Japanese citizens who experienced the destruction of their city by the atomic bomb. It describes the image when thousands of innocent people were killed and injured. The full text was read on the radio. The tragic events and the dramatic scenes performed by the characters generated strong feelings in the hearts and minds of the readers, which brought about a public discontent of the American political position.

Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952) is one of the most well-known novels of the American postwar literature. The story is of a young black man who struggles to survive in the racially divided society of America in the pre-Civil Rights period, when segregation laws striped African- Americans of the same basic human rights as the whites had. The protagonist has no identity, no name, and no address. He draws his invisibility to the reader. He is alienated to his own country. Even when he travels, he feels like irrelevant to the landscape, the thing that causes him difficulties. The novel starts with a harsh reality about his life; and the way he is abandoned by society: "I am an invisible man" (Ellison 2). He explains that he was a man of flesh and bone, and he had a mind. He says he was invisible because people refuse to see him, and when they approach him, they see his surroundings and anything except him. The society refuses to see him as a human being. He even wishes that people could know and notice him as the ghost in the poetry of Edgar Allan Poe, or those of Hollywood movies.

Another well-known of the post-war American literature is Jerome David Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye* (1951). The novel expresses the emptiness and aimlessness in the life on the American individual. The protagonist Holden Caulfield realizes that the flourishing life of the postwar America was meaningless. He is disappointed by the phony world. He also shows that the unpleasant reality of American was masked with luxury. So, Caulfield worked on exposing that hypocrisy. The novel anticipates the social and cultural turmoil that will take place in the next decades.

One of the celebrated novels of the post-war era is Norman Mailer's *The Naked and The Dead* (1948). It pictures the frightening views of the war by telling the story of the difficult lives of a small group of soldiers who experience dehumanizing situations during their service in the South Pacific. The intolerable world created by Mailer reflects the sad reality. However, in the essay, *The White Negro* (1957), Mailer's best

expresses the WWII. He considers the War as a reflection of the gloomed human condition. Millions of people were killed in concentration camps out of the heartless torture. The essay let the reader face the perverted image of Man and the society that he created (Mailer 1948).

The most famous Beat figure Jack Kerouac wrote the novel of *The Dharma Bums* in 1958. The story is narrated by the character. The novel shows the influence of Buddhism on Kerouac. Japhy is the narrator of the story, who desires a very simple life. Through Japhy, Kerouac expresses his longing and heartbreak over the old days and the wild American spirit. He criticizes with astonishment the lost America by the unlovable silence of the postwar suburban houses which are all similarly arranged on both sides of the street. Family members are no more having conversations, because of television. "It begins to appear like everybody in the world is soon going to be thinking the same way...electrified to the Master Switch" (Kerouac, 191, p. 52). By using the term Master Switch, Kerouac wanted to signify the authority's tendency of controlling the American society. He highlights the image of a modern America with a robot-like and lifeless society.

Kerouac repeats his dystopian vision of the future in his short story, *CITY, City, City*. He predicts an unpleasant upcoming, when a city consisted of three levels surrounds the entire globe. Inhabitants of this huge, overpopulated, and machine-like city are controlled and manipulated by ruling elite, by means of mass media, and drug trade. (Kerouac 1971) Another remarkable novel of the post-war era is William S. Burroughs' *Junkie* (1953). It illustrates the image of an alienated America; a place which seems very different from the country that the Americans used to live in. Burroughs portrays a metaphorical picture of a fearful America. He sees a dream about New York City. In his dream, he sees huge scorpions moving in and out of empty drugstores, cafeterias, and bars. The street sides are full of weeds. He is unable to see any people. The novel emphasizes America's transformation from what the writer considers a simple and inoffensive country to a place that is different from the one which he ever used to know. The novel is a foreshadowing about America's future when humans are replaced by harmful insects. By mentioning the insects and the weeds, the author aims at symbolizing the American militarism during the cold war. Burroughs foreshadows that such a circumstance will lead to the decline of America in the future Burrough (1953).

Poetry also touched people's lives in this period. Many significant poets appeared such as, William Carlos, who paved the way for other celebrated poets like Allen Ginsberg, Robert Lowell's *Life Studies* (1959), and Ginsberg's *Howl* (1956); represented a representative portrait of modern American life. The poetry of the 1960s had to deal with existing political and social matters like the Cold War, the Atomic Bomb. Movements such as the Beat Generation were established, claiming racial and sexual equality.

Organization Man, White Collar Man, White Negro, Hipster, Beatnik are all terms of a cultural discourse after 1945 that indicated a deep interest in understanding manhood and the role of men in postwar society. However, there are no correlating terms for understanding women in the period from the same perspective. The counter-term to Beatnik, "Beat Chick," does not give us a cultural actor in this group but an imposed vision of a sexually available, silent and sullen girl who did not write but instead existed to meet the needs of Beats and those who hung around them. Holmes (1952) states that this fetishization of female members of the Beat Generation is written over women's bodies regardless of the role they actually played in Beat culture or of how they saw themselves. With the apparent obviousness of a lack of "public" space for women in the Beat discourse, how is one to understand the claims made in John Clellon Holmes' article, *This is the Beat Generation*, an article that places women at the center of the Beat phenomenon? He explains that several months ago, a national magazine ran a story under the heading 'Youth' and the subhead 'Mother is Bugged at Me'. It concerned an 18-year old California girl who had been picked up for smoking marijuana and wanted to talk about it. While a reporter took down her ideas someone snapped a picture. In view of her contention that she was part of a whole new culture where one out of every five people you meet is a user, it was an arresting photograph. In the pale attentive face, with its soft eyes and intelligent mouth, there was no hint of corruption. It was a face which could only be deemed criminal through an enormous effort of righteousness. It's only complaint seemed to be "Why don't people leave us alone?" It was the face of a Beat Generation (Holmes, 1952, p. 10). Holmes, by taking the girl's story as the lead in his article, before the anecdotes about juvenile delinquency and the fear of instant death in an atomic holocaust, is arguing that not only are the Beats much younger than those who will write about them, but also that there is a place for women in this generation that novels have failed to provide.

Regardless of how Kerouac, Holmes, Ginsberg and others saw the postwar period, women, especially those in their late teens and early twenties, did not wait to be permitted entry to this group; they took the space that was rightfully theirs. Furthermore, Holmes connects the desires, feelings and fears of women with those of men, who are not the only ones who are searching for something they cannot define. If the face of the Beat Generation is the face of an 18-year-old girl, then why were women ignored in the literature of the Beats, in the mass media profiles of the Beats, in the historical studies of the Beats and in the ensuing postwar period? The answer is that women were minor characters, as Joyce Johnson, Beat novelist and the unofficial memoirist of the Beats, puts it in the title of her memoir, *Minor Characters: A Young Woman's Coming of Age in the Beat Generation*. In other words, women were not seen as participants or cultural actors in any important or meaningful way, even by women who lived through the period. Most historians of the Beats have accepted the premise implied by Johnson's title without interrogation. Women, including writers, who were participants in the Beat scene, were at best secondary or tertiary figures, witnesses to the greatness of male literary giants and those they wrote about. More importantly, there was no place for women at the center of the movement, only its margins, hovering beside or below in significance to other figures from whom the Beats drew inspiration, such as the African-American Hipster and the Jazzman.

If the Beat writers had not completely marginalized women in their novels and poetry, those who studied their culture (including many women) finished this work of marginalization, ignoring the central place of women as participants in Beat life and as writers in their own right. The past decade has seen a rise in the analysis of both women's lives in the Beat scene and the importance of their literary contributions to Beat culture, with new collections of essays on Beat women writers and a collection of interviews with surviving female members of the Beat Generation. However, no full-length monograph has been written on any women writer of the Beat Generation and the number of articles on female Beats is half that of the number of articles published on male Beats or masculine Beat culture in any given year. Even though these new studies of the period do grant women a larger role in the development of Beat culture and thought, they are still unable to posit a unique cultural space for women writers from which they can be judged on their own merits as full members of this culture.

However, this section will examine a number of women Beats, and black Beats represented by Amiri Baraka, works form part of the canon of Beat writing that was published after *On the Road*'s explosion on the literary scene in 1957. In this sense, Joyce Glassman, Elise Cowen and Bonnie Bremser, like LeRoi Jones, represent the second generation of Beats; those too young to participate in the immediate postwar group and who wrote after the Beats became a known public commodity. I argue that Joyce (Johnson) Glassman's first novel, *Come and Join the Dance*, illustrates not only the challenges for young women who dissented from the norm in the postwar period, but also the limits that men attempt to place them within the physical and discursive spaces of difference from mainstream society. I will contrast Glassman's "successful" literary career and experience amongst the Beats against that of poet Elsie Cowen, whose literary footprint was limited by her untimely death and by the active attempt to erase what her parents saw as an embarrassing period in their daughter's life. It is impossible to separate Glassman and Cowen, who not only is a major character in *Come and Join the Dance* but also, influenced her friend Glassman's writing dramatically.

(Breines 1983) positions Glassman and her contemporaries as a part of the larger literary movement under the label of the Beat Generation, not as a side project or addendum to this movement. She makes this point because the way in which women writers of the Beat Generation have been examined and had their works collected in separate editions, labeled women writers or Beat women, is problematic because it unintentionally positions women writers as marginal to the male Beats. By placing women within the center of the Beat orbit, the culture of the Beats can be seen for what it was, an attempt at dissent from the dominant culture of the period. Thus, the writing of young women in the late 1950s and early 1960s can be seen as specific to the period, with its own methods of creating dissent or transgressing against a society that was attempting to stifle not only their independence and creativity.

Sociologist Wini Breines examines what the Beat Generation meant to women growing up in the 1950s in her study, *Young, White, and Miserable*. She argues that when male social critics looked at the problems of America after the Second World War, they overlooked or were blind to the problems of women:

Whether considering family, gender, or youth, the focus was male and often excluded, ignored, misinterpreted, or blamed females. “Deviants” such as Beats, hipsters, juvenile delinquents, homosexuals, even communists, were almost always males (psychologically damaged by “bad” mothers) in the scholarly and public mind. ... There was, however, a barely visible cultural rebellion of some white, middle class, girls and young women in the 1950s, in the latter case of women who were slightly older who actually lived or flirted with a bohemian life (Breines, 1983, p.128).

The question for Breines is not whether female rebellion exists: it is why it seemed invisible to social commentators, the mass media and the experts of postwar America. Women were a part of the culture of dissent, however, they have not been written into it in any meaningful way. They are not written in because, according to her, “middle-class white girls’ disaffection was barely discernible because no one thought to consider it and because its expression was often oblique” (Breines, 1983, p.129).

However, Breines (1983) maintains that their restlessness was significant; as in their experimentations with glamor and sex, they were laying the groundwork for rebellion in the years ahead. Ignored by society, women’s and girls’ discontent simmered in the darkness. Women in the 1950s have been cast as not only conformists in the neo-traditionalist American culture but also as part of the ‘machinery’ that forced men to conform to the strictures of this culture. They are literally part of the background rather than actual people or, “when fifties defiance was and is portrayed ... young white women are invisible. They disassembled and appeared to conform. Sexism in mainstream and alternative cultures constrained and shaped their defiance into forms not easily recognizable” Breines, 1983, p.130).

When women and girls did choose to dissent from the social norms, they found that Beat and other subcultures were composed almost exclusively of working-class males, and were masculine in conventional and chauvinistic ways while girls’ processes of identification were complex. Middle-class white girls who rejected dominant culture had no choice but to adapt male versions of rebellion and disaffection. Taking on dissenting roles that were created by and for men had differing results for women. This

can be seen very clearly in the Beat Generation. In Glassman's work, the main character, Susan, desires to lose her virginity before graduating from college; a desire that is very different from the desires of the promiscuous boys she meets. For Susan, the loss of her virginity represents not only ascension to adulthood but also a transgressive act, while the desire of the boys she meets is merely for more gratification. Similarly, Elise Cowen's acceptance of her lesbianism had dramatically different social consequences than did the coming out of her former lover, Beat poet Allen Ginsberg. Cowen's lesbianism put her on the periphery of an already marginalized group while Ginsberg's homosexuality was both accepted and, to an extent, supported by fellow Beats. For Bonnie Bremser, escape from the norms of society ended with the loss of her child to the authorities and her feeling that she had failed as a mother. My point here is to connect Breines' analysis directly to the Beats, which Breines herself does, albeit in a more abstract way. In taking the male vision of rebellion or dissent, it did not mean that women accepted their role as men saw it: they took what they needed from a sexist culture much like the one they already lived in and made up the rest as they went along. Rebelling against conformity and the feeling of emptiness trumped everything else (Breines 1983).

As one of the first studies of women and girls in Beat culture, Breines makes connections to social rebellion or dissent not made before. Helen McNeil continues Breines' argument that the Beats developed a male discourse that women had to enter on male terms. She states that: The Beat movement's amplification of dominant cultural discourse about women closed off the movement as a ready ideological escape route for the would-be female rebel. But even before ideological debate could ensue, the beat life had to be lived. Many would-be women writers simply could not transfer the Beat lifestyle across gender lines and survive in a society that had gendered female behavior much more conventionally.... For Kerouac, there were no female because external social controls of the woman functioned as silencer even before the rhetoric of the chick could function (McNei, 1996, p. 192).

McNeil's argument goes beyond Breines in terms of the limits of female involvement in the Beats. For her, social constraints by mainstream society made sure that women could not become as much a part of the Beats as they desired. A single woman, hitchhiking across America in search of kicks, was so unheard of as to be laughable.

The flaw in McNeil's argument is that she implies that to be a successful Beat writer one must be like Jack Kerouac. Many Beats, John Clellon Holmes, for example, did not travel extensively and were still considered to be part of the Beat Generation. Moreover, McNeil limits women's involvement in the literature of the Beats as well as the culture. In discussing the low number of women in a bibliographical list prepared by Ann Charters, McNeil states that Joyce Johnson should be added to the list for her autobiography, *Minor Characters*, but completely ignores her Beat novel, *Come and Join the Dance*.

Friedman (1998) argues that properly delineating or demarcating what is and what is not a Beat novel, along with understanding what makes one's life "Beat" would go a long way toward building a more accurate sense of how many women were involved in the Beat movement. Amy Friedman continues the discourse of female absence in her discussion of women writers of the Beat Generation. She argues that "for a while it seemed that Beat criticism was keen to sustain the boy-gang preserve of the central Beat coterie of male writers ... by denying the contributions of any women, or casting them as peripheral" (Friedman, 1998, p. 230). However, the discovery of Beat writing by women has proven that there are gaps in the boy-gang thesis. Friedman comments that "Their own words work to dispel the 1950s 'Beat chick' stereotype which accrued in the wake of intense media attention to the Beat movement" (Friedman, 1998, p. 230). She further distances women from the center of the Beat circle by invoking the words of Barbara Ehrenreich, that the Beats were a male-only club where women entered as part of their adventure in much the same way as the cars they raced back and forth across America did. Friedman acknowledges that those men who were involved with female writers did give some support to their partners and treated them as more than just instruments of sexual release or economic support. Furthermore, she argues that if these women come to their art through men, they emerged as mature artists on their own. (Friedman 1998). However, the support of men was not enough to shield from what was occurring around them. The discourse around danger is also a central theme in Friedman's article, as when she points out that "if some writers discovered the possibility of blasting into transcendent poetic achievement, there was also a downside of imploded selfhood. The ideal of liberated expression contrasts with the threat of madness and death as lurking punishment for non-conformity" (Friedman, 1998, p. 238). She makes it clear that the joy of expressing oneself honestly for the



first time carried with it a much more serious potential consequence for women. These consequences took various forms, not only death or madness but also at the very least the risk of unwanted pregnancy or abandonment by men they had either lived with or been married to. This emphasis on the dangers of being a female Beat is important to note, because while many male Beats also met tragic ends the danger posed for these women was greater.

(Johnson & Grace 2002) have worked hard to ensure that women are granted their proper place in Beat culture. They have edited two books on women writers and other members of the Beats, *Girls Who Wore Black* and *Breaking the Rule of Cool*. The first is a collection of essays on women writers, and the second is a collection of interviews with the surviving members of the group. In the introduction to *Girls Who Wore Black*, they argue that since its advent in the mid-1950s, Beat generation writing has been only partly seen. The category is typically equated with three men considered to be the movement's principal literary figures – Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, and William S. Burroughs ... this familiar approach is misleading and instantiates an incomplete account of Beat. It excludes numerous women Beat writers.

(Johnson & Grace, 2002, p.1) Johnson and Grace claim that the failure to recognize women as being 'equally' as good at either writing or rebellion led to the constant marginalization of women artists. Few have been recognized in the postwar literary schools. (Johnson & Grace, 2002) maintain that, the Beat movement is distinguished for the considerable number of women writers who were part of the community yet hidden or ignored. Women Beat writers continued to be unacknowledged and omitted from historical concepts and literary considerations of the movement. Social norms of the era limited the acceptance of women as important to the writing and culture of the Beat Generation. While they have continued much of argument of women's invisibility in Beat culture, Johnson and Grace's texts include more analysis of a greater number of women writers than ever before. According to (Friedman 1998), this inclusion of women in the work of Johnson and Grace into the Beat discourse as writers and dissidents in postwar America offers a clear change from previous studies.

Novelist Joyce Glassman published her first novel *Come and Join the Dance* in 1961. The book is about a week in the life of Susan Levitt, a student at a girl's college in

New York City. It is known as one of the first Beat novels written by a woman, but Glassman's contribution to the Beat Generation has for the most part been ignored. Instead, she is known for her autobiography of life among the Beats entitled, *Minor Characters: A Young Woman's Coming of Age in the Beat Generation*. Published in 1983 under the name *Joyce Johnson*, the memoir has become in all regards the voice of the Beat Generation (Friedman 1998). (Glassman 1962) says that the novel opens with Susan writing the final examination of her undergraduate career, which she is having a hard time concentrating on. She is thinking of the trip to Paris she will take after her graduation. This desire to escape to Europe is completely anachronistic for a Beat novel; Paris is the land of Hemingway, and the Lost Generation rather than the young people coming of age in the mid-1950s. Upon finishing the exam, Susan returns to her dormitory room and realized that she had been erased from it. (Glassman 1962) maintains that, Susan has come to the realization that the girls at the college do not matter as individuals, instead, they exist as an abstract, shaped by the situation and events around them. She fears that she will never matter, that she will live out a life set to her that is not of her own choice. The trip to Paris would be only a temporary break from the life of marriage, work, and then motherhood that awaits her with her boyfriend Jerry. She is torn between what is expected of her from family and society and what she thinks she wants to do. Susan does not want to could marry Jerry, she cannot see an alternative to what all her colleagues are doing: finding jobs as secretaries, getting married and preparing to become mothers. She chooses to avoid Jerry's waves to her, and stays independent.

Sylvia Plath (1932-1963), is another Beat writer who represents Beat women. She was a short-story writer, a novelist and a poet from Boston. One of her outstanding works is a semi-autobiographical novel under the name of *The Bell Jar*. (Inness 1984) declares that, *The Bell Jar* challenges the predominant notion in the 1950s that women were inferior to and dependent upon men. Regardless of their individual abilities and desires, women were expected to become wives and mothers, and secretaries. Young women such as Esther were expected to sacrifice their own dreams to the needs of their husbands. The novel attacks the assumption that women are inferior to men by displaying the moral weakness and hypocrisy of the male characters. Plath's novel mocks at the arrogance of middle-class American society in the 1950s. According to (Plath 1967), all the markers of American prosperity – consumerism, the global

supremacy are viewed as disgusting and suffocating. The pressure to meet to social standards – of femininity, results in the elimination of individuality. Characters that do conform are often viewed as unfeeling, "numb" robots. Esther's feeling of being confined under a bell jar besides describing her depression, it also serves as a general metaphor for a society muffled into uniformity by its own conventions and norms.

In discussing the Beat culture and heritage, we cannot ignore the role of African American writers who enriched the Beat literature. LeRoi Jones, known by Amiri Baraka, was an African-American writer of essays, fiction, drama, poetry, and music criticism. He taught at a number of American universities (Miller 1983). Baraka's works draw on topics whose themes range from Black liberation to White racism. I will focus on Baraka's *The System of Dante's Hell*, a novel written in the early 1960s and published in 1965. Baraka wrote this novel while he was still a Beat poet living in Greenwich Village, associated with white, artists such as Allen Ginsberg, Charles Olson, and Frank O'Hara. However, the text according to (Lee 2001) moves toward the cultural nationalism that dominated Baraka's writings from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s. Baraka began work on the novel at about the same time that the notion of a distinct 'culture of poverty' began to pervade public discourse in the United States, Lee maintains that *The System of Dante's Hell* exemplifies the similarities between this poverty discourse and the idealization of poor Americans, especially, poor African Americans that invade the Beat literature of the 1950s and that stuck to Baraka's cultural nationalism. The major theme of *The System of Dante's Hell* is the dilemma of the African-American intellectual educated according to Western values and traditions. Baraka believes that such a person finds himself in a hell, not of his own making, one of the middle-class values which estrange him from his origins and make him an imitation white. He as a result loses his black heritage. He stands between two worlds which he altogether loves and hates. Baraka conserves Dante's gyres, the circles which contain various sins. While some of these are Dante's classifications 'the incontinent', 'lasciviousness', the diviners' those who inhabit these circles are condemned by Baraka's judgment. Moreover, he does not maintain the order of Dante's classifications. He tells the reader that his own heretics belong at the lowest of the circles, logically, for these have been unfaithful to their own origins.

Another famous African-American Beat writer is Anatole Broyard. He was an editor and literary critic. He was born in New Orleans. He wrote for *The New York Times*. He wrote *Portrait of the Inauthentic Negro: How Prejudice Distorts the Victim's Personality* (1948). In the essay, Broyard tries to present an analysis of the situation of the American Negro. Gates (1997) reveals that to Broyard, the ultimate horror of discrimination is the victim's unconscious remolding of his own personality into something untrue to himself. At a time when social action is the accepted dominant trend, Broyard's doubts about the value of organized group struggle against oppression may seem highly debatable to most; and others will consider his prescription of individual responsibility and self-determination as a strong medicine indeed. Broyard's portrait of the 'inauthentic negro' suggests that "The inauthentic negro can hardly know himself because his 'self' is mainly a 'tension between an accusation and a denial" (Broyard, 1948, p.64).

### **3. Individuality vs White Middle Class Values in Brossard's *Who Walk in Darkness***

This chapter discusses Chandler Brossard's *Who Walk in Darkness*, which is a record of the Beats' search for individuality and experience in the marginal areas of America as an attempt to escape the white middle class values marked by conformity, conservativeness and rejection of the other. The novel is an autobiography of a month of Brossard and his friends' life in Greenwich Village, narrated by the character Blake Williams, who is the author Brossard himself. The study displays the tension between the ethnic groups in Greenwich Village that shows the cultural conflict and class distinction that takes over the mainstream trend of the American culture in the post-war era.

The post-war era was the time of systematic racism. Racist thoughts, feelings, as well as actions were built into the Americans' daily life. It was substantially profitable for whites, meanwhile painful for the colored the others. Subsequently, the essential part of the life of both the Whites and the colored others is either directly or indirectly determined by the country's systematic racism. Bankers and plantation owners' approach to individuals were based on racial discrimination. According to (Brossard 2000), in the late 1940s, when the events of *Who Walk in Darkness* takes place, a poll was made by *Gallup*, reveals that 43 percent of those who took part in the poll approved racial segregation in buses and trains. Furthermore, most of them rejected whites and blacks working and living together in the US army. A few years before the novel was written, a survey revealed that half of the people who took part in the survey thought that white people should have the priority at any kind of job.

During the post war period, seeing a white girl with an African American boy used to be considered as an odd view to be seen in the street. Blake Williams describes such a situation at Greenwich Village:

Walking towards us was a Negro boy with a white girl. They were holding hands. The Italians they passed on the sidewalk stopped talking and stared after them. The couple looked straight ahead. The girl was quite good looking. They passed us, avoiding looking to us. These spade intellectuals really think they've made it when they get white girl, Porter said. The guy is crazy to do that down here, Max said. The Goths beat up three of these dark boys last week for doing the same thing. What about the cops? I said. The cops? What a laugh, Max said. The cops don't care if these guys are beaten up. Most of them approve it. (Brossard, 2000, p.75)

The above quotation exemplifies the tension between ethnic groups of America during the Beats' era. It demonstrates how bizarre and unacceptable is seeing a black and white couple together. Even the cops that represent the state authority approve it when black guys get assaulted because of dating a white girl. Williams' speech also shows the inauthenticity of some black men when they try to chase white ladies in particular just because they consider having love affair with whites as an achievement that may raise their rank within such a racist society.

Brossard's work demonstrates the Beats' attempt to interact with the marginalized groups of the American society in Greenwich Village. Blake Williams and his friends desire to understand the hip culture, but they are not sure whether they will be fully understood or get accepted in a different cultural setting than their own. On the way to a dance hall, Joan reveals this fear to Blake in their conversation:

Do you think these people will mind our being in their dance hall?' Joan asked me. 'How do you mean?' 'Well won't we look out of place, being the only white people there?' 'They don't care. Besides, they are not all Negroes. Many of them are Puerto Ricans and Cubans. 'That's the same thing, isn't it?' 'Not quite' 'Well, as long as we don't have any trouble with them "We won't". (Brossard, 2000, p.25)

Upon arriving at the dance hall Joan is still concerned about the place, and that they will not be welcomed. Blake describes the club and its inhabitants and he indicates the possibility of violence that is missing from their regular hangout place, the Sporting Club Bar. This notion of violence is a result not only of what Williams sees as a

tendency of Latino and African-Americans to fight with weapons but also the transitive nature of whites when entering the dance hall to mingle among its regular visitors. The use of physical force and violence occurs in the club when a Puerto Rican boy and a Jewish girl are caught dancing together. As Blake Williams explains:

The big Negro walked into the center of the dance floor... He grabbed the boy by the shoulder and yanked him away from the Jewish woman... He was talking angrily and rapidly. 'No good. Not here,' he said. He spoke to the boy in Spanish, looking angry. The Jewish woman looked as though she might cry. 'Okay. Okay,' the boy said. He was looking away from the big Negro. 'Got to keep the place clean,' Harry said. (Brossard, 2000, p. 36)

The access of whites like Harry Lees, Blake and the rest of the white group into an African-American and Latino-American social territory might have been made the manager feel the need to separate couples according to race in an attempt to satisfy the whites. This event shows the ethnic and class rupture that challenged the American culture and society after the Second World War, the fact that put the American liberal pluralism under question and drove some whites as the Beats to rebel against the bitter reality of the social and cultural discrimination had been practiced against the minorities by the whites' arrogance and desire to reject the other.

I also discuss the narrator's attitude towards love, validity, and authenticity and compare it with that of the character Henry Porter. On the large scale, the novel embodies life in the US in the post WWII era, under the circumstance of the cold war that caused a constant anxiety and horror of a sudden mass death caused by a potential nuclear war with the Soviet Union. This drove groups such as the Beats to adopt a day-to-day lifestyle and nihilist attitude and enjoy the 'authentic' moment of pursuing joy and pleasure. As for the Beats, hedonism had been thought to be achieved through getting involved with drugs' experimentation.

Using marijuana, alcohol and other kinds of drugs, was claimed to be increasing creativity, productivity, and insight. The Beats demand individuality through sexual freedom. The Beats challenged the white middle-class values by putting the emphasis on those forms of sexuality that are ostracized by the society--such as bisexuality or

homosexuality. Such things are outrageous to the white American middle-class norms and therefore, unwelcomed to a regular family pictured within the 'American Dream'. The Beats found another way to hedonism which was Jazz music, where they found a space for self-expression and independence. They constantly spent money over the bars and clubs which that offered offer Jazz music. Through the pursuit of hedonism, the Beats had been creating, a hypothetical world that is different from norms that the middle-class Americans accepted. The Beats world was for those who were tired of the social repression. The Beats adopted Hedonism, and free expression of individualism as a resistance against the white middle-class values that created such an identity which is marked by perusing material wealth, consumption, racism and the rejection of the other --that is colored people, whites who think differently and live outside the mainstream social norms. I argue that racism and the white middle-class values create 'inauthenticity' -- that is black people passing for white.

The character Henry Porter is a man with a light black skin who suffers from identity issues. Due to his dark skin, he is ostracized by society. As a result, he desperately tries to pass as a white to get accepted by the racist white middle-class American society. Brossard shows Porter's inauthenticity throughout the novel. Porter's inauthentic personality is reflected by the way he chooses to deny his origin and race in an attempt to acquire a better position within the white society of the post -WWII era in America; however, people keep taking him for a 'Negro'. Porter's 'inauthentic' attitude is also reflected in his marriage to a woman that he doesn't really admire. She is a Spanish lady from San Francisco who definitely doesn't belong to the white middle-class community. When he occasionally talks about her, he makes fun of her unawareness of cultural matters, and her attachment to the housekeeping, so on. Porter had a child who died at the age of three months. He and his wife were going to the movies quite often and she spent a lot of time in the kitchen preparing fine meals for her husband. According to Brossard; soon after Porter's child dies, he becomes literary minded. Basing on that, he decides that his wife is a burden on him and that the lifestyle he has in California is meaningless. So he leaves his job and abandons his wife to move in New York where he begins his literary career and start a new life pursuing a different personal identity. He tries hard to get rid of his Western accent, but he is unsuccessful at doing so. Porter's inauthenticity becomes stronger when he does things, that he doesn't really believe in nor does he like. He tries to adopt the Harvard student's man's



identity by dressing like a Harvard man; however, he hates Harvard men. In fact, he can't succeed in adapting the Harvard style of dressing; he simply misses many details about such a style. Therefore, people can't take him as a Harvard man. Along with that, he begins to pursue such a kind of girls Harvard men usually go after. He meets a Bennington girl who had been followed by many other men. Porter courted her by making use of his boldness and his talent in dancing. She was tired of over-mannered men of Harvard types so she made a relation with Porter for three months believing that he was the one she was looking for. Furthermore, she intended to marry him. But first she thought Porter might have been in need of using psychoanalytical therapy. It seems that she felt his inauthenticity- trying to pass as a white, besides his unstable personality and his apathy/carelessness, which are characteristics that the Beats are known for. That's why she might have estimated that Porter was not a normal person and he that he is in need of psychoanalysis before she marries him. She convinces him to do so and she afforded the money needed for the psychiatric treatment sessions. However, he stops going to the analyst after five weeks of sessions.

Furthermore, he leaves the girl without even explaining to her why he has to leave her. "Being with her had convinced Porter that he could make the grade with her type. It gave him the confidence to know this. It made him feel like he was going to acquire style" (Brossard, 2000, p. 18). Porter has always been in conflict with society about his race, and he has never had enough courage to face the truth about it. No matter how hard he tries to fit in the predominant norms, he always gets rejected by the majority. In a dialogue between Harry and Porter, Harry asks him: "Are you a Negro? What do you care? Porter says after a moment. Everybody I know cares. Why don't you settle it once and for all? Are you or aren't you a Negro?" (Brossard, 2000, p. 230). The dialogue reveals the predominant popular discourse that is known by its conservatism and prejudice restriction against the racial others. It also shows Porter's inauthenticity- that he is embarrassed by revealing his true racial identity. Porter avoids Harry's question, he instead tries to provoke him by referring to what might look to Porter who essentially thinks as a man from the marginalized areas, like an odd personality; as Harry belongs to the high class. This clarifies that the interaction between the different cultures and class of America ends up with tension and rejection of each other. As Porter's attempts to cross the racial lines and join the predominant community are all rejected by the whites, similarly Harry's attempt to interact with the marginalized

people is faced with rejection. Harry Less is a Harvard student who drinks heavily. William Gaddis noticed a part of his own personality in the character Harry Lees; however he didn't show any objection to the portrayal. He is the white guy who belongs to the high-class American society. He thinks and acts as one of them. Based on that, he has much concern about Porter's racial identity. He is meant to be illustrating Sartre's inauthentic character of 'bad faith'. His language, as well as his manner, determines his 'inauthenticity' which is accomplished by his interest in Porter's race. Though he enters the marginal spaces by his choice, he is incapable of accepting people there regardless of their race or ethnicity. Harry escapes his natural habitat, which is marked by conformity and conservation and consumption, as well as compulsory military service which is relevant to the cold war with the Soviet Union, a factor that contributes in Harry's fear and anxiety and the need to search for a better life with his Beat friends. He tells Blake:

Have you ever terrified of anything for a long time, Blake? I mean scared sick?...Do you know why I was not in the Army?... because I told the Army psychiatric that I had had fairy relations with men "... I was scared. I had to do something. I was afraid then that if I were taken into the Army I would crack up. I did not think I could make it... All during the physical examinations I carried around with me a letter from a doctor saying I had an anxiety neurosis. So they would not induct me. And I was shaking all the time. Now I despise myself for it. You can't imagine how I feel about doing it. (Brossard, 2000, p. 220-221)

When he tries to escape from his fearful world caused by the State politics of collectivity in the post-war era-- that is militarization of society and spreading anxiety among people of a potential war; he is faced with rejection in the marginal spaces for his Harvard style and peaceful manner. He reveals that:

I'm terrified that people might think I am a fairy... It has been suggested to me. You know, whenever I go into a bar alone I can't stay there alone for very long without getting a sick feeling that people are looking at me and thinking I'm a fairy... And the funny thing is I don't like queers. And I really don't feel queer. That is I like women. But I am still scared all the time. (Brossard, 2000, p. 220)

This shows the inauthenticity of the American society when they refuse to respect and accept each other for who they are and what they are. As we can see Harry is faced by

people's reaction towards his Harvard manner, which is based on prejudgment and preferring class distinction over individuality. Their hatred towards him reaches the climax when at the end of the novel he gets assaulted by a bunch of Italian gangsters.

Another character in the novel who suffers from racial discrimination is Porter's girlfriend Grace. She has issues concerning her ethnic identity. She is from an Italian background. In a conversation with Blake, she reveals the truth that she was not proud of her origin:

I often wish I weren't a Wop... Every Italian in this country is a wop. The people in this country think there is no such thing as a decent Italian. They're wops and ginzoos...Everybody thinks the Italians are dirt. They class them with the Negroes...Do you know what it is like to try to get into a country club if you're a wop? They wouldn't touch you with a thirty-foot pole... It's worse than being a Jew. At least anti-Semitism is above board. But nobody even talks about anti-Italianism...You don't know how lucky you are being an Anglo-Saxon. (Brossard, 2000, p. 191)

The above statement made by Grace declares the class distinction and racism in the Post-War America. Italian-Americans was considered as the lower class as Grace suggests. She clarifies being rejected by the majority because of her ethnic identity. She says people consider Italians dirty and non-decent. Furthermore, they put Italians, African Americans and Jews in a low rank. She describes how people mistreat her in the clubs. It is such a treatment which drives the Beat members as Porter towards inauthenticity, but for Grace even if she is unhappy with her origin, she, unlike Porter, is authentic. Grace refuses to deny her origin when Max tells her: "I can never get it through my head that you are a wop... I just can't believe it. You're too beautiful and too smart to be one" (218). Although she is discriminated against, because of her ethnic background, and she is unhappy with it; she still authentic, she does not contradict her ethnical background in public, she instead answers Max like: "Well, I am" (Brossard, 2000, p. 218). Grace's dialogue appears as a parallel to the purity of the narrator's, and she subsequently arises as Sartre's person of a 'good faith' in the novel.

Chandler Brossard is dramatically influenced by the philosophy of existentialism, which claims individuality. He derives the existential tendency from both the French philosopher and writers Sartre and Camus to protest conformity and alienation caused

by the middle-class values. The Existential values of the character Mersault in Camus's novel attract Chandler Brossard with his indifference to the predominant social norms, and his alienation.

“Existentialism grew out of the nihilistic philosophy of Frederic Nietzsche, which proposed that life is inherently meaningless. For the existentialist, man is both free and condemned to give his life meaning” (Cusatis, 2010, p.16). This can be seen in Brossard's characters when they search for freedom and individuality through nihilism. They spend their time moving from a bar to another searching for joy and authentic moment out of the mainstream; breaking all the middle-class values by interacting with the racial and ethnic others, premarital sex, abortion, and smoking marijuana. As for Sartre, he summarizes his existential thinking in three words: “existence precedes essence. That is, humans exist before they can be defined as anything” (Cusatis, 2010, p. 16). Sartre's belief is based on the principle that Man is subject--not object. That he/she must be free in making choices. This subjectivity is quite clear in the characters Blake and Grace of Brossard's *Who Walk in Darkness*, when they defend individuality and refuse to go with the mainstream, neither with that of the white middle-class values nor the wilderness of the marginalized minorities. The notion of personal identity is the essence of existentialism, and existential questions invade Brossard's novel: “Who am I? What does it mean to live authentically? What gives life meaning?” (Cusatis, 2010, p. 17).

The narrator of *Who Walk in Darkness* Blake Williams uses the spoken word 'Nothing', a word that carries the same contextual reference of both Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* and Camus's *Myth of Sisyphus*. Similar to Mersault, Williams rather describes than explains, and like *The Stranger*, *Who Walk in Darkness*--represents a demonstration of the existential absurdity of life rather than an argument about it. The narrator aims at performing a 'clean work' in a place where he didn't have to tell lies. The narrator attempts to document his perspective of love and authenticity by contrasting it with that of Henry Porter's blatant inauthenticity. Throughout the novel, Brossard doesn't judge Porter and his friends; neither has he praised those who agree with him. He displays a boxing match that he and his friends have been to. The match is going between two different characters, one of them represents vice and the other virtue. Through the contrast between the characters' support of each boxer Brossard

lets the reader judge and differentiate which character in on the authenticity side, and which one is not. He presents no 'self-righteousness' in his view of the novel; Williams's interpretation is objective and neutral. He is very careful in avoiding any sort of subjective judgments. Brossard uses such a tone during presenting the dialogues between the characters which guarantees him to avoid all ambiguity, dishonesty or pretension. Through her tone of speech, only Grace seems to represent the purity of the narrator and she accordingly appears as the only person of a 'good faith' in the novel. Henry Porter, Max Glazer, and to an extent Harry Lees all exemplify Sartre's inauthentic boys of 'bad faith' and Brossard encounters this by the inauthenticity shown through their language and their actions. Accordingly, differentiation and comparison were embodied through the boxing match between Coster and Phelps. Blake and Grace's favor: Costar is a skillful, clean-fighting boxer who knows his way around the ring. He never shows off. He plays by the rules. While Porter favors Phelps: a cruel, dirty fighter. Brossard includes a boxing match in his narration, thinking that a boxing ring is a place where inauthenticity of any sort is perfectly exposed. In the end, Caster's defeat at the hands of the evil and malicious Phelps seems to suggest that those who play clean and respect the rules are endangered by those who follow no rules, like the criminals in the novel who assault Harry and leave him for death or 'underground' characters like Porter and Max. That is why the novel ends up with a dreadful note as Blake and Grace conclude that 'escape' is their only protection against the violently ridiculous world in which they are sentenced to live.

The conclusion of *Who Walk in Darkness* engages with Grace and Blake's shock at the end of their search for a better life outside the mainstream cultural space. The characters come into collision with the violence that ruled the marginalized spaces of America once they hear about Harry's tragic accident when he gets badly beaten up by a bunch of Italian gangsters. Grace tells Blake: "Oh, God. Let's go away, Blake. Let's get out of this terrible place" (Brossard, 2000, p.245). Signifying that life outside the mainstream often and unavoidably ends with tragedy. She suggests to him to get back to the majority. This clarifies that the Beats reject to become a part of the mainstream culture and claim their individuality as a more 'authentic' life in the marginal spaces. They challenge the middle-class values that offered conformity, racial and class discrimination; yet, they couldn't achieve their goal. As it appears, crossing from a cultural space to another was accompanied by rejection and violence.

So, they withdraw from the marginal social spaces to get back at the mainstream culture. Speaking of this novel, it does not offer any clear alternative philosophy that might replace or compete with the predominant one in terms of political, social, personal changes at the time when the novel was written. But it created a platform for hedonism that provided a model in America in the 1960s under the banner of the Beat Generation and a space of self-expression.

I intended to clarify that 'materialism' and the 'culture of consumption' that is attached to the 'white middle class', parallel to racism and class rupture of the post-war American society shape the identity of the Beats. This also shows the loss of faith in social principles, rejection of society and its classical values, creating a group mostly made of whites to explore the margins of society in a journey for self-exploration and a quest for a new personal identity and a new life outside the mainstream. Finally, the Beats get no answer at the end of their self-exploration journey. So, they consequently get thrown back to the mainstream mass culture without offering a clear alternative. They were thrown back to the mainstream mass culture, after getting repelled by the marginalized community, who reacted against them in a racist and cruel manner, like the tension described between the ethnic minorities in the marginal spaces that reach climax by Harry's being beaten down by an Italian gangster group for his white identity. But, they were successful in creating a platform to proportional changes in terms of individuality, like challenging the predominant conservative principles by inventing the interrelationships like the one between Blake who belongs to the white middle class and Grace with her Italian background who used to be considered as non-decent by the whites. They also supported freedom of sexuality. Yet, they failed in creating dramatic changes at high levels in terms of domestic policy—that is having no plan to change the policy of containment, materialism, and collectivity in favor of individuality. In addition to that, they spent no effort to improve woman's life and presence at least as far as *Who Walk in Darkness* in concerned.

Delmore Schwartz, the literary adviser of Laughlin noticed that few of the novels' characters were based on real characters who were friends of Brossard. Henry Porter represented Anatole Broyard, as well as Milton Klonsky, was represented by the character Max Glazer. Though Brossard claimed that his characters were not portrayals

of real people, Schwartz insisted on informing those two of the situation. So they threatened to sue Brossard unless changes were made. Moreover, Cap Field was based on Stanly Gould's character. Accordingly, Chandler Brossard had to make the required changes, Anatole Broyard had objection on the novel's opening line which starts with the sentence: "People said Henry Porter was a passed Negro" (Brossard, 2000, p. 5). He was concerned with the word 'Negro', so Brossard had to change it to the term 'illegitimate'.

#### **4. Hedonism vs White Middle Class Values in John Holmes's *Go***

*Go*, John Clellon's first novel, was first published in (1952). As Holmes acknowledges in the introduction to (Holmes 1980), the novel was based on real characters and real events. Moreover, many of the dialogues were literal copies of actual conversations. Consequently, it can be considered as a document of the Beat generation, picturing real-life events from 1948-1950 into a novel form. As a novel, it presents advancement toward self-understanding. As a documentary, it presents the essential group of Beat writers and other personalities related with this movement during the Cold War from a critical as well as sympathetic perspective.

*Go* explores the Beat's pursuit of pleasure (hedonism), their glorification of 'the underworld' and petty crime. It was Holmes who in collaboration with Jack Kerouac, introduced the term 'Beat Generation'. During the summer of 1948, Holmes met Kerouac at Allen Ginsberg's apartment, when Kerouac was twenty-six years old and Holmes was a novelist of twenty-two. They became friends. One night, they both sat around Holmes's apartment on Lexington Avenue thinking of their friends' characteristics and attitudes, their tiredness and oppression with all the forms. It was then when Holmes recalled that Kerouac had suggested the idea of a 'Beat Generation'. So, the phrase made its way into *Go*.

*Go*, the work of a knowledgeable interpreter and observer of the Beat group, is an autobiography that displays the Beat writers from a perspective that is critical and sympathetic at the same time. The novel indicates the two directions the beats took, one as a beaten down or defeated group/movement, and another, as more idealistic. Holmes wanted to structure his novel as a 'descent into hell' (Garcia, 2002, p.151), reminiscent of Dante's *Inferno*. The characters, want to experience the world of crime in search for spiritual conformity and meaning of life, by breaking all the predominant social norms, and exploring the marginal spaces of the country and establishing



interaction with whites/hipsters and the cultural, ethnic, and racial minorities, who rejected the middle class social norms.

The novel is divided into three parts. The first shows the life of Paul Hobbes and his wife Kathryn—that is, John Clellon Holmes and his wife Marian in reality, as they increasingly start to get involved in the bohemian lifestyle affected by Paul's Beat friends: David Stofsky (Allen Ginsberg), and Gene Pasternak (Jack Kerouac). Hobbes is trying to reintegrate himself and find a direction following the Second World War: he gets back to school, reads, and attempts to write a novel however without much confidence. Bill Agatson (Bill Cannastra), whose disgraceful and often cruel behaviors evolved from a deadly revelation of the world, and his inability to actually believe in anything, is hurting Verger (Russell Durgin) who deeply admires him. The second part of the novel marks the arrival of Hart Kennedy (Neal Cassady) in town. Kennedy is a stranger to the city. He is the white guy who is pushed by the eagerness and energy which the Beats are known for. It is this enthusiasm that affects his bunch of friends, and drives them to explore the marginal/hip spaces out of white middle-class territories such as Times Square, *The Go Hole*; the place that they never wished to go before the arrival of Kennedy. Parallel to geographic exploration of the 'underground world', His everlasting movement involves everyone in the novel in crime as moving around the city trying to get hold of drugs. Hart loves life and his eagerness for everything is largely infectious. Stofsky and Pasternak like him, and Paul is fascinated by his incredible ability for movement and action. It is with the interaction between Hart on a hand, and Paul and Kathryn on the other hand, the couple begins to smoke a joint, and they are present when Hart and Ed Schindel (Al Hinckle) steal gasoline. This causes Kathryn to openly protest, but Paul is silent even though he is not comfortable with the idea of stealing at all. This causes Stofsky to brutally criticize him for his hypocrisy, for going along with everyone's manners even though he secretly disapproves. Kathryn moves between conservative middle class values and the need for experimentation, and she even sleeps with Pasternak, but she never really accepts this way of life. She is attached to conventionality. At the end of Part II, Kathryn finds Paul's love letters to Liza, and she wants to leave him. She cannot stand the fact that Paul has lied to her all along three years. Afterwards, she becomes increasingly concerned with a new morality; a question of honesty versus hypocrisy rather than a matter of physical loyalty. Finally, the third part of the novel marks the movement

from the 'hot' world of Hart Kennedy to the 'cool', and illegal world of the underground with Little Rock (Little Jack Melody), Albert Ancke (Herbert Huncke), and Winnie (Vickie Russell). To support the drug habit, they get involved in crime. Hobbes reaches the understanding that the transfer from 'hot' to 'cool', and the elimination of the senses by abusing them, is the beginning of the end. He also comprehends that he is unlike these people.

Hobbes was married to an Italian woman named Kathryn when he joined the army before he started service in the WWII. Unlike Brossard, Holmes connects the story with the past, I mean, with his childhood, and then, his life along with his affairs and marriage, to clarify how he has reached the stage he was at when the story begins and why there is conflict in his marriage and his choice of career. By connecting the characters to life before the war, Holmes claims that restlessness was not exactly a postwar feeling. Both Hobbes and Kathryn were unhappy even before the war. Indeed, the war itself is described by Holmes as a temporary respite from having to grapple with this feeling of discontent or emptiness. Kathryn is a poor girl, a daughter of a laborer. by making advantage of living in a good neighborhood, she tries to convince herself that she will be able to get rid of what she considers as the 'stain' of her ethnic and class belonging. Back to Hobbes, his parents separated when he was a child, he grows up in Westchester in the margins and corners of the middle-class areas. He hates their values and attitudes and desires to live in the big city. He meets Kathryn while he is a university student, and she works for a company. Holmes describes their relationship as “two dejected conspirators in an alien city, who have almost given up hope of making contact with a legendary underground” (Holmes, 1952, p 30). After their marriage, Kathryn follows him to San Diego, leaving behind everything to live with him in a rooming house and work as a counter at a store.

As soon as Hobbes finishes his military training there, they both get back to New York. After a period, the couple realizes that the manner of their love making had changed, and that their relationship is no longer that of a regular, stable marriage. They got together by a marriage that was based on the mutual need for escaping the inconvenient social circumstances. They have both been outside the middle class zone of acceptance, and got tired trying to fit in the predominant social norms. Both of them have the desire to pursue happiness together. They thought that their marriage would

be the answer to their sufferings, and that they can together achieve the missing sense of satisfaction, and that their marriage would enable them to encounter the sense of alienation and isolation they were both going through as a result of the white middle class values. But soon, the marriage becomes a burden for both of them. Space and distances between them begin to increase as if they were moving in different directions. Hobbes is shocked by the fact that he has failed to fulfill the middle class perspective of happiness and success and being taken for a productive man by the society. This disappointment drives him to the university, and he starts to study philosophy as a way to search for meaning in life, and to “Re- assimilate himself and find a direction following the war” (Varner, 2012, p. 152). Meanwhile, Kathryn keeps working to support the family, which is another circumstance that increases the isolation between the couple. Practically, Hobbes is unable to make real changes into his life; he rather deepens the gap between him and the middle class society, while his wife keeps working to support the family, not having enough time to take care of her own life, nor to plan for her future. After he graduates from the university, he begins to work as a critic in magazines and writes some short stories taking advantage of the improvement in his intellectual level as a result of studying philosophy. He starts to assist his wife financially to afford the expenses of life. After his relative success as a writer, Hobbes feels the need to be admired and appreciated as an intellectual man by his wife, who is too busy working, and unready to really understand or discuss her husband’s ideas or show any kind of interest in his working field. As a result, he becomes attracted to another woman named Liza, his former colleague in the university. He thinks that she will understand him more than his wife Kathryn does. They eventually get involved in what might be described as a mental or spiritual affair that secures him a source of love that is based on intellectual and social agreement, and brings him psychological and spiritual relief. They write letters to each other, even when Liza stops writing him back; he keeps writing to her and keeps the letters at home without sending to her. The relationship becomes a one sided love, in a quest for an authentic moment that he cannot achieve by his ordinary marriage love afforded by his wife Kathryn. Because Kathryn has taken the middle class lifestyle for granted, and because of the incompatibilities in thought and education between them; she is unable to understand Hobbes's ambition to change his boring life by searching for authenticity somewhere outside the middleclass environment. So, by committing infidelity by the involvement in a relationship with another woman that he thinks she will give him the

authentic love, Holmes revolts against one of the most predominant middle class values, which is the marital commitment.

On the other hand, Kathryn too doesn't seem to be happy and comfortable with her marital life. Beside her struggle for life, she has to take care of housekeeping as well, without having real assistance from her husband. Meanwhile, Hobbes considers writing short stories a job, besides his task to educate Kathryn to be socially accepted among his new friends who are mostly literate people working in the field of literature. Although finding a place within such an intellectual community of the middle-class American society could provide a stable and secure economic situation for Hobbes's family. But, this is a lifestyle that he is already sick of as he feels no 'commitment' towards an organized system at any level. So, he deserts his friends and his work, to embrace a new world offered by a marginalized group of writers, who might be the kind of friends that Hobbes thought he was in need to interact with: free and wild people who are in action, searching for experiences. Hobbes drives Kathryn to hang out with his new friends Stofsky, Pasternak in bars and parties, discussing topics that are interesting to the Beats, such as adventures and exciting experiences, and their own perspective of life and happiness, which is totally different from that of the predominant middle class thoughts; subjects that Kathryn is not so much into. This group of friends differs from the previous group whose members were mostly authors. Members of the new group do not rely on papers or have a fixed perspective of any cultural/political issue of the country; they rather react to the daily matters and events spontaneously. The thing that Hobbes realized about them when he hangs out with them; the thing that distinguishes the group from the middle-class is their reaction to life. At that point, Hobbes knows them superficially. He is not deeply involved in their lifestyle yet. But the more he gets involved in the hedonist life, the weaker his relation with Kathryn becomes. As she begins to feel bad because of keeping up with Hobbes at the expense of her own life and needs. Hobbes still has the desire to affect Kathryn to change her thinking and her lifestyle in order to fit in his new life, and to understand him. He tries to involve her in the hedonist life—that is the pursuit of pleasure in the sense of the satisfaction of desires as the ultimate goal in human's life. So, he takes her out to the clubs, where he hangs out with his hedonist friends. One day, when Hobbes and Kathryn discuss the love affair between Gene Pasternak and his married lover Christine, Hobbes is surprised by discovering that Kathryn is open to the idea of

an extra-marital affair. She asks him: “what would you do if I wanted to sleep with another man? Should I do it? You’re always asking me” (Holmes, 1952, p. 61). Hobbes replies as:

If you wanted to, yes... if you were attracted to a man and wanted to sleep with him, why should I be worried until after you had done it?’ ... If you came back and told me that he was better than I was, that would be one thing. I’d have to do something about it then. But it was just pleasurable, but not better than what we have, what would I have lost? (Holmes, 1952, p. 61)

The above dialogue shows that Hobbes’s rejection of 'commitment' goes even beyond the sexual commitment in marriage. He tries to pull Kathryn’s leg into his world of 'freedom' and 'coolness', rejecting all the middle-class norms; by convincing her that an open sexual relationship is not as bad as it could hurt them, and that their love to each other will not get negatively affected. By doing so, Hobbes will be revolting against one of the most important middle-class values of the post-war American society— that is sexual fidelity. The conservative society of the 1950s used to consider sex outside marriage a taboo and a moral issue. So Hobbes here embodies the Beats' freedom of sexuality that challenges the middle class. On the other hand, Ancke involves Stofsky in crime by letting Little Rock and Winnie hide stolen goods in Stofsky’s apartment. Stofsky doesn’t want to throw them out because he is a loyal and innocent guy, so he doesn’t want to refuse to help them in that. When they are spotted and chased by the police, they drive the wrong way on a one-way street; they end up with their car overturned. Then, they all get arrested with the stolen goods by the police, after that their address was recognized. The group is considerably sobered after getting arrested, especially, because Stofsky was innocently involved in such a mess. Hobbes’ feels scared when he for the first time sees Stofsky out on bail.

Hobbes is getting obsessed with an idea that nothing is important to his hipster friends - they are beyond any morality or interest other than the present: But looking back into the room where Ancke and Winnie were lighting up sticks of tea and trading opinions of mutual friends now in jail, he felt that he had dropped into a world of shadows that had drifted out of the grip of time, which was now inescapable to him; a world in which his values were a nuisance and his anxieties an affront (Holmes, 1952, p.262). After

hearing Ankle and Winnie exchanging opinions about their memories of some of their friends who eventually ended up in jail, Hobbes's interest in them turns to horror. As he realizes the uselessness of their insights, and that they would one day be destroyed by their irresponsible and wild ideas, he becomes very uncomfortable. He realizes the fact that they are gradually disintegrating, and that the madness of their ideas and lifestyle might eventually lead them to the abyss. These dangers never concerned his hipster friends but him. So, he gets ready to leave the place in pain.

A week later, Hobbes gets shocked by another disaster. Agatson gets killed in a tragic accident, when on the train, he is drunk and overjoyed. After that, the train leaves the station and he tries to fool around by getting his head out of an open window. While his friends try to pull him back as he was drunk, his head hits a platform column and crushes to death. In the gloomy bar on River Street in Hoboken, where the group goes in the aftermath of Agatson's death, Hobbes feels a dramatic sense of finality. Holmes describes the marginal gloomy territories on the way to the club. The group sits under a wooden shed, looking through the wide and lonely view of the river, seeing weak lights from the ghostly Jersey coast beyond. They got on the boat, "The fretful motors and the black sounds of implacable water all contributed to a sort of hypnotic isolation, in which thoughts were sharp and inescapable" (Holmes, 1952, p.506). As soon as the ferryboat stops, they get off and walk impatiently into the repulsive streets of Hoboken, looking for the bar which Trimble had spoken of. Massive silos and piers stretch through the river side of the street, while, opposite them, there was a series of unoccupied, crumbling buildings with an enormous silence of shatter about them. With their splintered and broken windows and doorless entrances, their gutted corridors, these buildings seemed as though they belong to what Holmes describes as "a nightmare of a ravaged and deserted Europe" (Holmes 1952, p.307). But in the basement of one of these haunted like houses, there were lights, faint voices, the sound of music. A neon beer sign stated Rheingold, and through the door they could see the soft glow of bottles and a few motionless persons sitting over the bar. The walls in the place were paint-less, the ceiling was low and long, there were a few separated and empty tables at the back. Generally, the place was sad and gloomy.

As the friends group themselves around the curve of the bar, Hobbes is suddenly aware of an extreme thirst and exhaustion, as though he has just run a long distance without

stopping to think. It is the intense exhaustion “that comes when a man has risen too far out of the mesh of natural occurrences, and believes he can see their cause and ultimate consequence, but the same time is powerless to prevent or alter anything ” (Holmes, 1952,p. 307). Hobbes feels alienated to the place and so sad, as Agatson’s death took over Hobbes’s mind at that night, not as a fact to which he must adapt his mind, but rather thinking of the meaning of life, which he could not quite understand. All of a sudden, a strange man carrying an accordion in his hands appears at the door:

A stooped, bony young man in a shapeless black overcoat ... his pale lips made him look like a misanthropic student, deformed by books and cold and ill-lit midnight brooding, who bitterly rejoices in his degradation...he stared at everyone with icy belligerence for a moment, and then he suddenly commenced to pump the gasping accordion in a frenzied tarantella. A curious uneasiness seized everyone, even though one of the sailors grabbed the barmaid and begun to stumble about in a graceless and obedient dance ... “Whoo-oo-ee!” Trimble yelled, flapping his coattails, and then, pulling Kathryn from her stool, he begun to caper and trot, like a blindfold man running along a precipice...“No, no” Kathryn was saying. “I don’t want to, Peter stop it!”. But he was too drunk to notice the intensity with which she said this, and only roared: “Take the hemlock, drink it up”! (Holmes, 1952, p.308)

Then the music was suddenly over, and the musician got out of the door to disappear into the night. The club is not as fancy as those of the middle-class suburbs, but still one can feel the freedom. There is no ethnic and racial discrimination, or class distinction. However, the wildness, randomness, and apathy of the marginal spaces don’t provide Hobbes the “authentic” moment of happiness and the meaning of life that the Beats are searching for, because they did not achieve it in the middle class society; but it rather makes him feel as though he was waking up and becoming aware of a dreadful reality. It is the reality of horror with no certain end or meaning. Hobbes experiences the ultimate 'descent into hell', which is 'Abandon hope'. Then he looked at the others and perceives “The gnaw of isolation in each of his friends...Abandon hope all who enter here” (Holmes, 1952, p.309).

Hobbes observes the same feeling of isolation, disappointment and anxiety in the characters within the club. The musician dances and plays music, but he is unhappy

with the place and the people there, as he gazes each one of the attendants with hostility before and after he plays the music. Kathryn's intensity appears when Peter is drunk and disturbing her by his crazy dance. Janet is not enjoying the party; she is just trying to go with it in order to be accepted by the group. This is quite clear when Hobbes hears her saying: "I don't really like to drink. Why do you then?" (Holmes, 1952,p.307) Asks Ketcham; "To be sociable. Would anyone like me if I didn't?" (Holmes, 1952,p.308) she replies. Trimble's exaggerated laughter is actually a mask behind which he is hiding an emotion of which he is either extremely ashamed or proud. Pasternak is irritated and gloomy; he seems to be puzzled how to fit the joy after the melancholic facts about Agaston and Stofsky. Hobbes knows these things by looking into each of them. But what hurts him most, is when he looks at the expression on Kathryn's face. He seems to see deep inside her, where even she is incapable of seeing, and then, he feels sick. All of a sudden, he puts his head against that wall, breathing hard asking himself: "what am I doing here? What is happening? Why is this so?" (Holmes, 1952, p.309). He feels like he can never lift it again, as all the faces, words, disturbing events, and the nights of the last months are going through his mind as a flashback. Dead Agaston, Stofsky, Hart, Ancke, Dinah, Christine, all of them, everywhere lost, everywhere wild, homeless, loveless, faithless, All with some awful flaw, "But why did I dignify their madness? And why does everything else seem spiritually impoverished?" (Holmes, 1952, p.310). even the wall that he leans against is full of illiterate statements, Phone numbers and naughty temptations, slang words and dirty sketches; all cause the bareness of heart from love and offer nihilism instead. "Words as would be written on the walls of hell... this was what drove Agaston so wild" (Holmes, 1952, p.310). Obviously, somewhere, somehow this deadly perception must have affected him, and corrupted his mind and heart. Hobbes suddenly realizes that someone who trusts and accepts this image, is going to be violated, outraged, and suffers the most intolerable of all losses: "the death of hope. And when hope dies there is only irony, a vicious senseless irony that turns to the consuming desire to jeer, spit, curse, smash, destroy. I must go out of here! He groaned aloud. I must get out!" ((Holmes, 1952, p.310). Having no courage to look at the mirror, avoiding seeing his own miserable situation; drunk, exhausted, lost, and scared. He returned to the bar, but the first thing that comforts him is Kathryn's face. Then he approaches her, she puts her arm about his neck, she says with worry: "what is wrong honey?" ((Holmes, 1952, p.310). He holds her tight, and listens to her strange and childlike speech. Meanwhile,



he experiences a sudden feeling of tenderness for her. He says: "let's go, I've had enough" ((Holmes, 1952, p.311). It means that, Hobbes and Kathryn finally decided to escape that 'hell', leaving the group behind, while the attendants in the club seem to have been surrendered to the reality of their existing life without questioning, or any signs of regrets. So, in the conclusion of the novel, Hobbes tentatively, reconciles with Kathryn, and with the image of his spiritual home.

In conclusion, the two of them tripped back down River Street, holding one another's hands through the rain and dark around them, as they could barely catch the last ship back to New York. Kathryn says to him drowsily: "you won't let me fall off the boat, will you?" (Holmes, 1952, p. 311); he holds her closer, gazing out across the darkness and impulsive water at New York, and a beam of lights towards which they were moving. For a moment, he keeps looking forwards among the uptown towers, expecting to see a light coming from their apartment when he roughly says to himself: "Where is our home?" (Holmes, 1952, p. 311), as he couldn't find it. This statement raises questions and doubts about this symbolic resort into domestic love as a means of salvation. As he fails to find his spiritual home in both cases: first, when he decided to go for a dangerous adventure through his hipster and wild friends out of the middle-class social norms and space. He is shocked by the cruelty of the 'underworld' of the Beats, without achieving a clear answer on his question about life and its meaning. Secondly, even though he flees back to domestic life and marital love in search of salvation, yet he can't find his spiritual home. I consider it as a weak point when the writer is not critical enough to present a clear alternative to the irritating middle-class values, and an alternative meaning of life different from that of the mainstream values. Yet, Holmes displays both the positive as well as the negative side of the Beat life. The character Hobbes is unable to decide whether he belongs to the 'underground life' of the Beats, or more to the traditional world of commitment and responsibility. He seems to lie somewhere between both worlds. As Part of him rejects the middle-class values, yet, he is not absolutely comfortable in the Beat's domain either.

Even though the novel ends on a pessimistic statement, the novel is open-ended, leaving the reader wondering about the final outcome. Nevertheless, Hobbes seems to become a better person, at least, as a result of his contact with these people. Dennis McNally considers that Holmes as an intellectual succeeded in presenting an honest

work which portrays a sense of alienation. The author's position in the novel is as an outsider. When he enters the 'underground' world of the hipsters who live in the marginal areas of the country, He is not completely a hipster; he enters this world rather as a tourist or an explorer. That guarantees him neutrality and objectivity when interpreting the image of the Beats to the reader. Holmes shows the good and the bad points about the Beats when he shows that the Beat's world is a place of freedom of choice, and also a dangerous place in which one may waste his/her life because of nihilism and the danger of the wilderness that mark the Beats' world.

The 'descent into hell', marks one of the courses of the Beat movement. The move into the world of petty crime and hard drugs goes together with a loss of feeling attained by the drug abuse. It leads to a neglect and causeless violence just for 'kicks'. This represents the 'beaten down' part of the Beat generation, the use of the word Beat here stands for a defeated, exhaustion, and been burdened with guilt. Norman Podhoretz considers this as a development of the Beat authors' rejection of the intellect in favor of spontaneity and what he calls a pure feeling. This judgment made by Podhoretz might be only one side of the truth. I consider that Hobbes's experimentation of the underground world is necessary. Although it doesn't get him to his desire—that is the 'authenticity' in life, but it helps him to understand the reality of what is going on in the marginalized areas of the country. More importantly, he at least gets a minimum of self-understanding. He realizes that, neither the conformist life suggested by the mainstream middle class suits him, nor does the wild hedonistic life of the marginalized groups.

*Go* also presents the story of David Stofsky's personal progression in the process of the self-understanding, throughout his interaction with the hedonist group. As he rejects Jack Waters' craziness, as well as the nonsense of his hedonist friends; not to forget that he is innocently involved in crimes by his friends. Stofsky's jury into the 'underworld' concludes with the realization of the universe that 'God is love', and that the only obstacle to love and good is the apathy of the human heart. He comes to the conclusion that he had better live according to his vision. As a result, he embraces a life of charity, and he spreads out consideration and compassion to all. Stofsky signifies the other side of the Beat life--that is the blessed side. Here the rejection of the middle-class values of the post-war American culture is accompanied not by

nihilism, but by a search for a better way of living, and a higher truth. Holmes seems to share the perception of David Stofsky (Allen Ginsberg) about the sickness of the world: Man's lack of love and loneliness is the cause of his/her frustration. Like Agatston, who has a communication problem with his surrounding and even with his women who are regularly destroyed by their relation to him. Holmes's sensibility is beyond the shallowness and the misbehaviors of the middle-class norms; he rather sees beyond them into the underlying cause of frustration --that is the lack of actual human interaction and pure love, regardless of ideology, class, race and ethnicity.

## 5. CONCLUSION

As was argued in the introduction, this thesis is about the emergence of the Beat Generation as a sub-culture opposed to the values of the white middle class. The Beat movement is a reaction to the social, political, and economic changes that the United States of America witnessed in the fifties and the sixties. The country went through an economic booming in the post-war era. As America shifted from the war industry to the production of consumer goods, in which white American citizens were mostly benefited. Making use of the GI Bill, and even the priority in getting jobs, people who wanted to make families and start a new life, could easily build houses in the countryside, to change it to suburban inhabited by the consumer white middle-class society, leaving the cultural and ethnic minorities suffer poverty and segregation in the marginal areas of the county. Parallel to that, the government of the United States practiced the policy of containment as a response to the cold war with the Soviet Union, under the pretext of the policy of containing and controlling communism. People's liberty was deprived, and the Americans had been culturally and ideologically controlled through social media and a lot of intellectuals who claimed individualism were repressed via the FBI institution. In addition to that, the Americans lived under the condition of a constant anxiety of a sudden death because of the fear of an expected nuclear war with the Soviets.

All these facts led to the creation of the white middle-class society that is known by conservation, conformity, and consumption. It is marked by its rejection of individuality, in terms of personal freedom and freedom of ideology, even, by the rejection of the racial other. It was also marked by the pursuit of material wealth that is embodied in the so-called the 'American Dream'.

Driven by the unpleasant living condition, the thrust for freedom and sense of curiosity; a group of intellectuals, mostly whites, revolted against the mainstream trend, and the so-called 'American Dream'. To escape the depressing conditions of life

under the predominant norms, and to create and enjoy an authentic moment of a virtual life away of the frustrating American reality of the post WWII; they decided to change their approach to the 'American Dream' from material gains to joy and pleasure in their life, through the search for experience in the marginal spaces which are inhabited by the African-Americans, and other ethnic minorities such as Porto Ricans, Italians, beside criminals, gays and lesbians; to pursue the existential concept of authenticity - -that is obtaining freedom and fullness of life, with the affirmation of the individual of 'real' self, in which the proportion of congruency between individual's everyday behaviors and this 'real' self-becomes the base for evaluating the authenticity of Man's life. They were driven by an intellectual energy, anxiety and sense of alienation. They rejected the conventionality which embodied the white middle-class values and they insisted on the idea that the individual should define himself and his reality only through his own choice. Through hipsterism, they opposed the predominant puritanical moralities; and they brought hipster attitudes and practices such as freedom of sexuality, new dress codes, and self-expression through Jazz Music, as well as drugs habits into fame.

The group names themselves the Beats, the term that had been coined by the most famous member of the Beat Generation, Jack Kerouac. It indicates the feeling of having been used, it has several meanings. In a musical sense, the term 'Beat' stands for keeping the beat, being in harmony with others. More precisely, it refers to the jazz beat. In the sociological and psychological sense, it calls the condition of the outsider, a person who is out and down; the one who observes society and rejects its values and disciplines.

In Chandler Brossard's *Who Walk in Darkness* (1952), the Beats' seeking for authenticity is displayed through their support of individuality as a response to the white middle-class values. The search for authenticity is embodied by glorifying and supporting individualism, and the refusal to go with middle-class values. In Brossard's novel, Blake Williams's claim for individuality is shown by a comparison of his authenticity with the inauthenticity of the character Henry Porter.

Blake goes beyond the mainstream norms and the white's conservative values by entering the marginal spaces of the country and interacting with the marginalized and segregated ethnic and cultural minorities of America, claiming individuality regardless

of ethnic and cultural background. On the other hand, the inauthenticity of the character Henry Porter that is caused by the racism and the cultural segregation that the white majority practiced against the minorities is displayed. Porter is a 'Negro' who is desperately trying to pass white by pretending the Harvard style that he doesn't admire in the first place, in order to avoid racial segregation and to get accepted in the white middle-class social zone.

In the second section of chapter three, the Beats' rebellion against the white middle-class values is discussed along with the issues of hedonism and petty crimes. Hobbes involves himself and his wife Kathryn in an experience in the underground world of the marginal spaces of the country, in search of an authentic life gained via ultimate hedonism—that is to Hobbes, getting rid of all the white moralities and social norms, in an attempt to escape the social conformity of the white community.

In the conclusion of both novels, the characters' journey of spiritual exploration ends with trauma. William Blake is shocked by the cruelty that controlled the marginal world. The white Beats who entered this world are discriminated against, and rejected with violence; refusing to give a chance to the Beats to insert an individualism that can replace the predominant prejudice and cultural segregation.

Similarly, Hobbes spiritual journey ends with trauma in the novel of *Go*. As the protagonist rejects consumerism and refuses material wealth to interact with his hipster friends who lead him to adopt a hedonist lifestyle; at the end, he realizes that hedonism doesn't give him authenticity. He, instead, experiences emptiness and meaninglessness. Finally, he comes to the conclusion that this emptiness and carelessness will ultimately lead to one's perdition as it happened to Agatson, as a result of too much excitement and carelessness caused by the abuse of alcohol. So, the protagonists of both novels get back to the mainstream, leaving the question of what solution did these two novels suggest as an alternative to the white middle-class values ambiguous. However, in the long term, they represented the beginning of what will later become a social code that attracts young people of different ethnic and cultural identities. They shared the same cultural and social space that is represented by a special dress code and attitudes linked to the Beat culture, where teenagers and young

people could experience the freedom of expression and sexuality, regardless of race and social class .

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