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## 'Making Difference', A Technique of the Beats for Extrication from Mundane Capitalism

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### Introduction

Stephen Greenblatt in his essay "Towards a Poetics of Culture" explains the disagreement between Jameson and Lyotard on the function of capitalism. Jameson, as Greenblatt mentions, distinguishes between 'individual' and 'individual subject'. Before capitalism we were individual subjects, "whole, agile, integrated ... we had no psychology distinct from the shared life of the society" (Veese3). This benign and illuminous totality was shattered when capitalism arose. Like Adam who fell from the Garden of Eden, we fell from the zenith of humanity to its nadir. That is, from individual subjects, capitalism turned us into individuals. So, Greenblatt continues that according to Jameson, the evil function of capitalism was that it shattered integrity and homogeneity and instead, brought about differentiation and heterogeneity. This utopian and paradisaic view is challenged by Lyotard who, as Greenblatt quotes, enunciates that "capital is that which wants a single language and a single network, and it never stops trying to present them" (Veese4). As opposed to the eschatological view of Jameson, Lyotard likens this function of capitalism to the Nazis' attempt to slaughter millions of Jews and other undesirables to bring about German integrity and sameness. In fact, Lyotard is at opposite end of this spectrum and inverts Jameson's idea arguing that capitalism functioned to destroy differentiation and heterogeneity and instead, brought about integrity and homogeneity; or as Greenblatt concludes "Jameson's capitalism, the perpetrator of separate discursive domains, the agent of privacy, psychology, and the individual, and Lyotard's capitalism, the enemy of such domains and the destroyer of privacy, psychology, and the individual ..." (Veese5). It should be noted that in this case, the Beats were dead set against Jameson and hotly supported Lyotard.

The Beats knew that in America individuality was in jeopardy and the establishment espoused and inspired conformity, obedience, and compliance. American society, in actuality, suppressed individuality, repressed natural desires, and forced everybody, instead of shaping a personal consciousness or subjectivity, to admit the social consciousness given or imposed by the establishment. As it is axiomatic, reality or truth is socially constructed but the Beats could not digest this kind of reality and wanted to have enough freedom to construct their own personal truth. If the individual had constructed his personal reality, he would have been different from others and himself would change into an 'other' and this was what exactly happened to the Beats. The different individual with his different reality would be considered as mentally ill or abnormal and the establishment via psychotherapy would strive to cure him so that he would manage to adjust himself to society and become identical with others or become an 'organization man'. Kerouac, Burroughs, and Ginsberg had all psychiatric experiences. Actually, they could not tolerate "a system of work, produce, consume, work, produce, consume" as Kerouac grows in *The Dharma Bums*(78).

The Beats' reaction to a society that trampled on their individuality and ignored their natural aspirations and forced them to conform was to be different and resist conformity and mix with marginalized groups and minorities like African-Americans or Mexicans who were like themselves different and resided on the periphery of American society. It was of course natural because "as people feel threatened by standardization, they search out and cultivate differences" (qtd. in Saleebey 56). Sal Paradise in *On the Road* refers to his energetic fondness for different people and experiences:

I shambled after as I've been doing all my life after people who interest me, because the only people for me are the mad ones, the ones who are mad to live, mad to talk, mad to be saved, desirous of everything at the same time, the ones who never yawn or say a commonplace thing, but burn, burn, burn like fabulous yellow roman candles exploding like spiders across the stars and in the middle you see the blue centerlight pop and everybody goes "Awww!" (Kerouac6).

By 'mad' Kerouac means different people; those who construct individual consciousness and object to the mundane normality of American society and decide to deviate from its standards. Sal abhors America's blandness and hates to see "gaunt men and women with the old Southern soil in their eyes, talking in low, whining voices about the weather, the crops, and the general weary recapitulation of who had a baby, who got a new house ..." (65) but when "A weary young fellow, muscular and ragged in a T-shirt, unshaven, red-eyed, came to the porch and rang the bell" (65), he opens the door and goes 'Awww' because at last he sees a different person: Dean Moriarty. In *Howl* Ginsberg, too, has a craving for difference and condemns this meaningless agreement or mundane conformity and sameness as a trick played by society: "(mad as you)—(sanity a trick of agreement)" (Schumacher31). Basically, to be Beat implies "a break with normal time, a transcendent of the mundane" (Swartz12). It is not accidental then that Lott, as Skerl reports, writes that readers are shocked by Kerouac's receptivity toward difference (*Reconstructing*178).

### 1. Illusion

The Beats cultivated illusions or, as Ginsberg called them, visions in themselves because they were highly personal and gave them a different personality and opened to them a new horizon which was closed to others. To help them have illusions, as it is true for Coleridge and De Quincey, they consumed different kinds of drugs. It is reputed that Ginsberg when high, saw his mentor William Blake reciting *Ah! Sun-Flower* in his room. He phoned his psychiatrist and told him that he should see and talk to him because Blake was just in the room and the psychiatrist told him that he had to be crazy and hung up. In *America*, Ginsberg points out to his awesome visions this way: "I have mystical visions and cosmic vibrations" (Schumacher28). Joanne Kyger, who was once labeled Beat, equates illusion with true reality: "I resolved to assume that everything that ever entered into my mind was no more true than the illusions of my dreams" (qtd. in Elkholy120). Olmsted explains that according to Buddhism in which the Beats were very interested, both the self and the perception of an outside world are illusions (Elkholy188) but it is usually forgotten that God does not create the world; we create it; we dream it. In American society of 1950s and '60s the establishment had created a world that everybody had to act within its scope but the Beats rejected that world and created their own because "any illusion is permitted", Skerl quotes Burroughs, "if we realize that everything is illusion" (*Front*204) and therefore this was a true difference between them and others: to create one's own world. Above all, illusion detached the Beats from their ego, the bogus rationality that they did not trust and instead allowed them to have more access to the unconscious.

Psychologically speaking, Freud recommended that psychoanalysis should cure illusion in patients because it "makes part of the self appear as other than ('an object for') the self (Gomez66). Winnicott, on the other hand, negates Freud enunciating that people should be free to create illusions. Illusion is positive and exists in human beings from the beginning: "The mother ... by an almost 100 per cent adaptation affords the infant the opportunity for the *illusion* that her breast is part of the infant" (15). As a matter of fact, Winnicott adds a third area to the two areas, inner personal psychic reality or subjective area and the

actual world with the individual living in it or objective area, already recognized in human beings. This third one is an intermediate area of experiencing to which the former areas contribute. Accordingly “It is an area that is not challenged, because no claim is made on its behalf except that it shall exist as a resting-place for the individual engaged in the perpetual human task of keeping inner and outer reality separate yet interrelated” (Winnicott3). It stands to reason that social psychology is strong in this theory and we can conclude that in the Beats, as opposed to ordinary people, the interaction of the former areas produced a third area of experiencing which is responsible for the creation of illusions and also for the Beats’ reputation of being mad because, as Winnicott claims, illusion “in adult life is inherent in art and religion, and yet becomes the hallmark of madness when an adult puts too powerful a claim on the credulity of others, forcing them to acknowledge a sharing of illusion that is not their own” (4). This third area, Winnicott reiterates, too, “is a product of the experiences of the individual person” (144). It is not accidental then that in the Beats’ life and literature novel experiences mean creativity, meaning, and difference.

*Naked Lunch* is a book of illusions. In a famous excerpt, William Lee, the addicted protagonist, retails in detail the story of his arrest by the detectives Hauser and O’Brien. Of course, it is clear that he has a grudge against them. Several times Lee speaks about his “only chance” and later the reader realizes that it is the chance of killing them. They enter the room with a pass key and catch him red-handed with a packet of junk, spike, and syringe there on the table. Now that there are a lot of evidences, Lee asks them to let him take a bang first. The detectives refuse but when he promises to deliver an old pusher to them, he manages to inveigle himself into their trust. But then

I squirted a thin jet of alcohol, whipping it across his eyes with a sideways shake of the syringe. He let out a bellow of pain. I could see him pawing at his eyes with the left hand like he was tearing off an invisible bondage as I dropped to the floor on one knee, reaching for my suitcase. I pushed the suitcase open, and my left hand closed over the gun butt--I am righthanded but I shoot with my left hand. I felt the concussion of Hauser’s shot before I heard it. His slug slammed into the wall behind him. Shooting from the floor, I snapped two quick shots into Hauser’s belly where his vest had pulled up showing an inch of white shirt. He grunted in a way I could feel and doubled forward. Stiff with panic, O’Brien’s hand was tearing at the gun in his shoulder holster. I clamped my other hand around my gun wrist to steady it for the long pull ... and shot him in the middle of his red forehead about two inches below the silver hairline (Burroughs 106).

All is perfectly natural as if an episode taken from a movie (Burroughs, it should be noted, was interested and dabbled in the cinema) but all of a sudden, everything goes up in smoke. The news of the murder does not appear in the morning papers. Lee calls the police station and importunes to speak to O’Brien or Hauser but the answer is shocking: “How many times I have to tell you no Hauser no O’Brien in this department” (108). Now the reader understands that all this is Lee’s illusion; or as Skerl says, it is a poststructuralist attack on the binary opposition reality/illusion (*Front* 12). It is reputed that Burroughs abhorred the police as “the recurrent cop of my dreams ... who would rush in when I was about to take a shot or go to bed with a boy” (qtd. in Baker 56). Or “nigger-killing sheriffs” (14), he refers to the police in *Naked Lunch*. In actuality, having this illusion Burroughs kills two birds with one stone. On the one hand, he subjectively avenges himself on the police whom he hated by murdering two of them within the confines of his own world and on the other, he experiences how it feels to kill. This is an experience that makes the difference between a writer who urgently needs such experiences and an ordinary person. So, illusion or strong subjectivity restores power to the person instead of subordinating him to other powers.

## 2. Marginalized Groups

To induce differentiation and heterogeneity in American society that had put the white majority on a pedestal and marginalized others and to prevent capitalism from bringing about sameness and homogeneity and to resist America’s unerring talent for blandness, the Beats mixed with the African-

Americans, Mexicans, and other minorities. At the beginning of *On the Road* when for the first time Sal comes to the west for new experiences, he is taken aback seeing a celebration in Cheyenne with “fat businessmen in boots and ten-gallon hats, with their hefty wives in cowgirl attire” and discovering America’s blandness and tastelessness: “I was amazed, and at the same time I felt it was ridiculous: in my first shot at the West I was seeing to what absurd devices it had fallen to keep its proud tradition” (Kerouac 21). Speaking of postmodernism, Lyotard contends that “Eclecticism is the degree zero of contemporary general culture: one listens to reggae, watches a western, eats McDonald’s food for lunch and local cuisine for dinner, wears Paris perfume in Tokyo and “retro” clothes in Hong Kong ... It is easy to find a public for eclectic works” (76). The Beats desired such a society in which they could enjoy, just as Lyotard demands, wide variety and complete freedom. As a result, they embraced racial diversity as a factor that could give them both novel experiences and differentiation.

Sal is fed up with his own dreary life and deeply wants difference: “I wished I were a Denver Mexican, or even a poor overworked Jap, anything but what I was so drearily, a “whiteman” disillusioned. All my life I’d had white ambitions ... wishing I could exchange worlds with the happy, true-hearted, ecstatic Negroes of America” (105). Predilection for difference is so strong in Sal that he even pays close attention to people’s different faces and appearances: “These people were unmistakably Indians and were not at all like the Pedros and Panchos of silly civilized American lore—they had high cheekbones, and slanted eyes, and soft ways” (162). Dean, too, is delighted with commonplace differences that he sees in Mexicans: “And they’re talking and wondering about us, like see? Just like we are but with a difference of their own, their interest probably resolving around how we’re dressed—same as ours ... the strange ways that we laugh so different from them, and maybe even the way we smell compared to them” (164). Sal had a hankering for a kaleidoscopic America of different groupings and interests like this: “Near me sat an old Negro ... Next to him was an old white bum; then a Mexican family, then some girls, some boys—all humanity, the lot” (105) and this was true plurality against which the U. S. propaganda warned, Swartz reports, as the “greatest threat” and the status quo had to be closely policed (Bloom 173). As a matter of fact difference is a technique of the Beats by which to extricate themselves from Jameson’s capitalism and change it into Lyotard’s. In American society of that time Sal can still find some differences that give him hope and bliss; for example, in Mill City: “the only community in America where whites and Negroes lived together voluntarily; and that was so, and so wild and joyous a place I’ve never seen since” (Kerouac 38). Sal, however, knows that if wishes were horses, beggars would ride; so, he makes his wish of difference come true. He mixes with the Mexican girl, Terry, and her family and friends, for instance. Additionally, the Beats extolled jazz because it was a different music and what Gair reiterates about Kerouac might be said about all of them: “jazz and its players showed him an alternative to the worlds he had known as a boy in white working-class Lowell ...” (18).

*Naked Lunch*, too, is a conglomeration of different races and a book of cultural diversity: “High mountain flutes, jazz and bebop, one-stringed Mongol instruments, gypsy xylophones, African drums, Arab bagpipes” (Burroughs 55) and this clearly elucidates that “Burroughs, in fact, activates countercultural humanism and community by assigning agency and regionality to the Other, replacing White intellectual and literary scholarship with Orientalized conflict against postcoloniality and globalization” (Chandarlapaty 70). The converse is what Carla Kaplan says; that the cold war era had “mania for category-making” and a “passion for creating and identifying human types, rooting out undesirables, marking the limits of national desirability” (Harris 93). Accordingly, ‘Divisionists’ in *Naked Lunch* allegorically bring about Jamesonian homogeneity, conformity, and sameness and show the ‘passion’ of Jamesonian capitalism for rendering society bland and tasteless; what Burroughs is so fearful of:

They cut off tiny bits of their flesh and grow exact replicas of themselves in embryo jelly ... there will be one replica of one sex on the planet: that is one person in the world with millions of separate bodies .... They say: “Just let me plant a few more replicas all over so I won’t be lonely when I travel .... And we must strictly control the division of Undesirables ....” ... “As far as the eye can see, nothing but replicas,” he says ... (Burroughs 81).

Conversely, Burroughs speaks of Factualists, himself a member of whom, who are Anti-Divisionist and prevent them from removing difference from society: “We must reject the facile solution of flooding the planet with ‘desirable replicas’... replicas would in all probability constitute an unspeakable menace to life on this planet ... We oppose the use of such knowledge to control, coerce, debase, exploit or annihilate the individuality of another living creature” (82). Kazin truly describes Burroughs that he “is different and writes out of his difference” (264).

### 3. Bureaus and Democracy

Burroughs was dead set against unity, sameness, and homogeneity. In *Naked Lunch*, he blames bureaus because they sometimes grow and bring about unity and therefore democracy, which is made of bureaus, is to blame: “Democracy is cancerous, and bureaus are its cancer. A bureau takes root anywhere in the state, turns malignant ... grows, always reproducing more of its own kind, until it chokes the host if not controlled or excised ... Bureaucracy is wrong as a cancer, a turning away from the human evolutionary direction of infinite potentials and differentiation ...” (67). In the same book, to depict how bureaus exterminate differentiation, Burroughs writes ‘the talking asshole’ that Beard describes it as a parable (838) and Seltzer as an allegory (220). This amazing story, told by Dr. Benway, is about a man who teaches his asshole to talk. The man’s abdomen moves up and down and farts out words producing a sound that can be smelled. The man works for a carnival and this is a ventriloquist act which at first is funny but after a while the ass begins to talk ad-lib on its own and tosses the gags back at him every time. Then the ass grows teeth and starts eating. Eating its own way through his pants and talking on the street, the ass shouts out that it wants “equal rights” (67). It drinks and cries jags and wants to be kissed just like any other mouth. Eventually the ass talks day and night incessantly and the man to silence it, beats it with his fist or sticks candles up it but of no use and the asshole says to him: “It’s you who will shut up ... Because we don’t need you around here any more. I can talk and eat *and* shit” (67). At last, the ass secretes a jelly that covers the man’s mouth and atrophies his brain but keeps his eyes because it cannot see and needs them. The jelly is called “un-D. T., Undifferentiated Tissue” (67). In actuality, all the man’s body becomes the asshole and all the differences are removed.

For this situation, Burroughs blamed ‘unions’ and ‘liberals’. He contended that they were the agents of capitalism or the bureaucratic establishment. Unions brought about homogeneity just like the un-D. T., and deprived people of their individuality. In this case, Arendt agrees with Burroughs and argues that the people united in one single opinion become uniform and lose individuality and lack plural perspectives and multi-dimensionality (Auestad 219). Harris reports that Burroughs in one of his letters writes that he abhors liberals and calls them “stupid bastards” (*Letters*106). But let us see why. Kerlinger defines conservatism and liberalism this way: “Conservative ideologies are hypothesized to subsume attitudes and values that promote freedom and self-enhancement, whereas liberal ideologies are hypothesized to subsume attitudes and values that promote benevolence and universal right” (Delamater285). Both Burroughs and Kerouac (a conservative) had problems with the term ‘universal rights’ in this definition because they believed that it was annihilating individual rights and differences in American society whose most important characteristic was individuality and agreed with Freud who spoke against liberals as conformists who held that man could be truly himself and fully human if he was in accord with his society (King46). Burroughs even lampoons the talking asshole because it wants ‘equal rights’, the same thing that liberals planned to prevail in society. By the same token, Kerouac and Burroughs (Ginsberg is an exception) throughout their lives avoided civil rights movements and were absolutely mauled by critics. Many critics blamed the Beats for their callous disregard for the feelings of the ‘other’ and argued that basically the Beats did not understand the situation of the other and by the same token, did not sympathize with civil rights movements: Sterritt (16), Vopat (Bloom4-5), Richardson (Bloom216), Ligairi (Holladay 148), Holton (272), Bennett (Myrsiades 8), Chandarlapaty (167). Firstly, as it was mentioned, the Beats had a strong penchant for difference and resisted sameness, unity, and conformity that those movements wanted to bring about. They were not, in fact, inattentive to the other’s plight but they had set out to fulfil their aim which was achieving plurality. In *On the Road*, Sal speaks of Terry’s “sister’s house in the

silverous Mexican shacks ... And what a wild place it is, with chickenshacks barely big enough to house a jukebox ..." (Kerouac53). Or "It was a four-room shack; I couldn't imagine how the whole family managed to live in there" (59). Secondly, Buddhism that the Beats studied, implied natural differences in human beings and as Watts submits, justified this behaviour of the Beats (Roszak136) because accordingly, suffering was the most salient truth of this world. The Beats suffered themselves; so it was natural for the other to suffer, too. "Born in this world/you got to suffer" Ginsberg says (Schumacher106). Holton quotes Malcolm X who had commented that "A few of the white men ... acted more Negro than the Negroes" (Bloom78). According to Buddhism, suffering could not be prevented and finding solutions was useless: "Generally, what we think will be an answer turns out to be the cause of more suffering, so again we look for a solution-the cycle is endless" (Hope 32). Therefore, the Beats would not bother themselves about it. Above all, to contribute to civil rights movements, the Beats needed a "commitment to a particular social strategy" (Martinez123) that of course, they did not make at all.

#### 4. Homosexuality

Although a homosexual, Burroughs never contributed to the gay rights movement and was never subsumed under the category of a 'gay' writer because he was a different homosexual. He distinguished between 'fag', a feminine homosexual, and 'queer', a masculine one. In fact, the sexual identity that Burroughs had adopted was different from both homosexual and heterosexual cultures established at that time. The sexual discourse of the capitalist establishment, had imposed a fixed heterosexual male/female category upon individuals. It had imposed upon, Burroughs knew, the male/male gay category the same femininity that existed in heterosexuality; that is, one side in this binary, the outed gay man, was regarded to be effeminate and accordingly, it had equated gay homosexuality with effeminacy. In the post-war era the American policy was that "the government was going to look for a new enemy, a new scapegoat" and "it would be us, the Queers" (qtd. in Russell 46). Hating the effeminate gay men or fags, Burroughs was to establish a different homosexual identity: masculine gay men or queers. Queers were masculine and therefore, opposing the mainstream stereotype, in the male/male binary both sides were to be preferably masculine.

Of course, Foucault reminds us, Rabinow reports, that since the Greeks this problem had existed. To make love to a passive, effeminate slave was natural because the slave was inferior but love between two Greek men created real problem because neither was ready to humble himself (*Essential*152). In *Queer*, Lee, reveals this discourse: "They have maleness, of course. So have I. I want myself the same way I want others" (Burroughs99). Allerton is shocked when Lee advances to him because he cannot recognize any femininity in Lee. Lee calls fags "subhuman things" and never likes to be one of them (39). Or in *Junkie*, "A room full of fags gives me the horrors" (Burroughs84). In actuality, Burroughs's social awareness of the capitalist discourse on sexuality causes him to resist it and bring about a difference. As Rabinow quotes Foucault, Burroughs, too, knew that society used discourse on homosexuality or in general sexuality, because it made possible "a whole series of interventions ... of surveillance, circulation, control ..." (*Reader* 61-2).

Russell takes Burroughs's male/male formula and the total denial of feminine as "a denial of difference" (135). In fact, to make difference, Burroughs, next to male/female formula, creates another one to extricate himself from the establishment's tangle of control and detach himself from the homogeneity of the formula prevailed by society because applying this formula to society's sexuality, the establishment planned to eradicate homosexuality as a different phenomenon. To expound on this denial, Russell takes the ass in the above mentioned talking asshole section in *Naked Lunch* as femininity that completely takes control of the body and because "Only the phallus dispenses identity; any social use of the anus, apart from its sublimated use, creates the risk of a loss of identity. Seen from behind we are all women" (qtd. in Russel 52), it annihilates the masculine part of the body and brings about a loss of identity (Russell 49). As it was mentioned, this section warns against the negative role of bureaus in creating homogeneity. The problem with taking the ass as feminine is that in this process, one side in the binary opposition male/female, that is female, completely destroys the other side that is male whereas these two sides are



dependable so that female implies male and male implies female. When there is even no transposition and the male side is removed, the female side has nothing to dominate or exert its power on and the result will be its own destruction: “Bureaus die when the structure of the state collapses” (Burroughs 67). Burroughs did not want destruction of male/female homosexuality. Opposing the mainstream discourse, he just wanted to create a different alternative on which power does not exert its control as opposed to the fag who is “passive, his body the site on which power exerts its unending control” (Russell 52).

Difference is highly important to Burroughs because firstly, it keeps individuality and secondly, instead of death and destruction, as Hibbard says “the chances of survival are greater when there are differences”(Schneiderman 18). Russell also contends that this confusion of identity in gays leads to schizophrenia and makes the example of Lee in *Queer* (13, 29, and 35) and continues that “The understanding of effeminacy that Burroughs produces ... conceives of the gender-schizoid gay male subject as a destructive amalgamation of Self and Other” (77). In the talking asshole section, or in male/female homosexuality propagated by the establishment, obviously it is not the ‘amalgamation’ which is destroyed but the ‘self’ leading to the destruction of the ‘other’, too. Conversely, Burroughs in male/male homosexuality, partially preserves the self, although schizophrenic like Lee, and at least tries to remove the amalgamation especially if Lee manages to find out a masculine partner like himself and if not, to survive, he at least has the opportunity of relegating himself to the feminine role. Quoting “I pulled off my clothes. He looked at me with unsmiling appraisal. ‘You fuck me this time,’ he decided”, Russell argues that “Such sex produces a situation in which similarity replaces difference” (137). In *Interzone*, “Queers have been worked over by female Senders” (qtd. in Baker 38) and this shows that the difference made by Burroughs was an anathema to the establishment whose evil agents, Senders, strived to change them into fags. Patently, this homogeneity (as Russell calls it) is not what the establishment wants. According to Russell, it is true that femininity may eventually affect Burroughs’s male/male formula if, for example, Lee, in *Queer*, does not manage to find a masculine partner (19) but this is only the last option for him. Although, lack of a masculine partner “put Lee in the position of a detestably insistent queer, too stupid and too insensitive to realize that his attentions were not wanted” (Burroughs 9) which Russell claims feminizes him (19), Lee “realized how tired he was, and how weak, but he was not ready yet to go home” (Burroughs 9). Burroughs’s characters, as a matter of fact, do not easily and completely surrender to the establishment’s discourse and do not go home until they manage to make a difference.

## 5. Conclusion

The Beats really panicked at the mechanical consciousness, bogus rationality, and social conformity that the capitalist establishment was going to impose on every individual. They could not envisage a country in which everybody thought and did the same and so, wished to have their own unique consciousness, visions, illusions, and in general ‘inner freedom’. They were fed up with ‘organization man’ devoid of individuality and subjectivity and with a bland America whose people ran a mundane bourgeois life. Social experiences, having had by everybody, did not absorb them because it completely ignored their individuality without which they could not live really as human beings but robots; they needed first-hand personal experiences to create and enjoy their own reality rather than admit the given reality of the time and to the establishment, personal experience was the same madness. They strived to resist false integration of discourses and instead, bring about a differentiation that was supposed to be at opposite end of blandness and tastelessness that was menacingly becoming rampant in America. To do this, perhaps the Beats were the first American group of writers who put minorities on a pedestal, mixed with them, and discovered a special beauty in them which could benefit their society of that time. Cold war and McCarthyism propagated a discourse according to which homogeneity and conformity to American values were regarded normal and acceptable and acting or thinking outside the confines of those values was considered as abnormal and un-American. The Beats, on the other hand, resisting this discourse and contributing to the counterculture of the 1950s and ‘60s, created a counter discourse

according to which everybody living in America had to be respected regardless of whether they are different. Although the Beats had their particular peculiarities and eccentricities, did not believe in the human rights and liberalism that strangled their individuality, and consequently did not contribute to civil rights movements, they attracted the attention of people to this fundamental fact that all this devoid of individuality was useless. The Beats' undivided attention to individuality and freedom, demanded by all societies today, caused critics' enthusiasm for the Beats' literature and life, which had waned after the 1960s, to become renescent at this time.

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