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**AN ANALYSIS OF THE BEAT GENERATION AND
ITS REPRESENTATIVES**

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Prohlašuji, že jsem práci zpracovala samostatně a použila jen uvedeníh pramenů a literatury.

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1 INTRODUCTION

I have chosen this topic due to my interest in this literary movement and due to its remarkable importance in so many areas. It is often ignored that the Beat Generation influenced the whole second half of the 20th century and that its impact on culture and society can still be felt today.

The Beat Generation was a literary movement which emerged in the post-war USA as a protest against conformist and material society. It represented an alternative to mainstream lifestyle. Beat literature and lifestyle changed the face of the 1950s and the 1960s not only in the USA but also in many other countries as their work spread.

The thesis is divided into a theoretical and a practical section. In the theoretical section I analyse the historical background in the USA after the Second World War, explain the possible meanings of the word “Beat” and generally introduce the Beat Generation and its main representatives. Then I try to point out the main spheres of influence of the Beat Generation in the USA with following comparison with that in former Czechoslovakia at that time. In the practical section I analyze an interview with Josef Rauwolf who is translator, journalist and expert on the Beat Generation. The interview is aimed at his professional and personal view on this subject with following comparison with the technical literature used while writing the thesis.

The main aim of the thesis is to analyze in detail the Beat Generation focusing on its social and cultural influence in the USA in comparison with the Czech Beat Generation and the underground. The interview is intended to show a different point of view than the technical literature I worked with.

To gather the necessary information various printed and electronic resources were used. They were mainly biographies, interviews with the members of the Beat Generation and history books. In the practical

section I worked with the information from Josef Rauwolf which was recorded during the interview.

2 THEORETICAL SECTION

2.1 Historical Background: Society in the 1950s in the USA

Even though the Beat Generation did not gain their influence until the 1960s, the 1950s were the fundamental impulse for their work. This movement started as a protest of a group of young people against the conformist, materialistic, rigid after-war society which was afraid of the horrors of the Cold War. [1]

When the Second World War ended, Americans were full of enthusiasm. They were justifiably proud of their military power and growing industrial development. The new era seemed to bring social calming. However, sociologists and writers saw problems inside this materialistic and conformist society. [2]

The beginning of this era was marked by McCarthyism. The Republican senator of Wisconsin Joseph McCarthy had a speech in Virginia on the 9th February 1950. He declared there that communists were operating at the Foreign Office, thus influencing the foreign policy of the USA [3]. The series of accusations, attacks and threats lasted for four years. [4]

The Encyclopaedia Britannica says the following about McCarthyism:

“The term has since become a byname for defamation of character or reputation by means of widely publicized indiscriminate allegations, especially on the basis of unsubstantiated charges.” [5]

The 1950s were also affected by the Korean War which took place from 1950 to 1953. It was a military conflict between North Korea supported by the Soviet Union, and South Korea. After the North Korean invasion to the South the United States and the United Nations joined the war at the side of South Korea and China at the side of North Korea. After

the war ended in July 1953, the front line was accepted as a boundary but the Korean Peninsula remains divided into two hostile states. [6]

The main feature of America after the Second World War was a great prosperity and economic development. This surplus led to uncontrolled optimism because economists convinced the public that permanent economic growth was possible and even inevitable and other economic crises were not expected. Because all of the other former industrial world powers (England, France, Germany, Japan and Russia) were devastated by the war, American producers gained a monopoly in the world. [7]

The symbol of American industrial power was the corporation called General Motors which was the biggest and the richest corporation in the world. It was the first company which made one billion dollars during the following decade. [8]

Thanks to the invention of Henry Ford and improving roads and motorways, Americans started to live in the suburbs. Possession of a house became a new American dream. However, after the Second World War, when soldiers were coming home, a question of housing became a disaster because construction industry was on the decline. This problem was solved by the businessman William J. Levitt. He improved the process of construction thanks to good planning and a strict control. New technologies enabled building of cheap, attractive detached houses for ordinary people. Levitt admitted that he had been inspired by Henry Ford's system of production. His workmen were divided into teams and every team was specialized in one activity. Levitt and his "Levittowns" caused a massive migration from towns to farmlands around them. This migration started in 1950 and lasted for the next thirty years. [9]

Another expanding industry was trade. Young people needed to fill their new houses with new things. Gradually, it became the most important way of spending free time. The standard of living was increasing and it was reflected in the whole economy [10]. Major changes

were also occurring in the way of alimentation. Customers wanted everything quickly and waiting for food became annoying as their lifestyle was accelerating. At the beginning of the 1950s a new type of restaurant appeared – the fast food chain McDonald's. [11]

Young people were buying a wide range of the newest household appliances for their new houses but undoubtedly the most popular product was a television. It had a radical impact on lifestyle and culture. People preferred watching TV to going to the cinema, theatre or reading books. [12]

To maintain the economic prosperity, it was necessary to convince consumers to increase their consumption. Therefore advertising became an important part of culture. Advertising costs rocketed by 1000 % during the fifties. However, that led to increasing indebtedness because people started to borrow money on credit cards. In addition, consumer loans rose by 800 % between 1945 and 1957. [13]

But indebtedness was not the only problem. Growing conformity and uniformity of life in the suburbs caused that the society had become homogenous. Another issue was the changing role of women. During the war women were challenged to fill in for men and do their traditional jobs. But when the war ended, they were supposed to put their jobs back and become perfect housewives again. Another proof of conformity was the tendency of Americans to join together in social institutions – civil clubs, gardening clubs, bridge clubs, and so on. The Americans were also returning to religion. A strong impulse for that was the atmosphere of the Cold War. The chief of FBI J. Edgar Hoover once said: *“Since Communists are anti-God, encourage your child to be active in the church.”* [14]

The criticism of the American post-war lifestyle soon came into existence and spread among intellectuals, theologians, writers, playwrights, poets, artists and social scientists. They criticised the constant economic growth and the lifestyle of the middle class living in the

suburbs. We can name for example David Riesman and his book *The Lonely Crowd* (1950) where he analyzed the changing personalities of Americans. He divided the society into two main groups: “the inner-directed” and “other-directed”. [15]

Riesman’s *Lonely Crowd* is reflected in a large number of post-war dramas. For example in Arthur Miller’s *Death of a Salesman* or other plays by Edward Albee or Tennessee Williams. They show the basic theme of American post-war literature and art: the feelings of alienation of the individual within mass culture. In the context of the Holocaust and the threat of an atomic bomb, many American writers refused to participate in celebrating the modern American lifestyle. As an example we can mention disturbing novels by Joseph Heller, Norman Mailer, J. D. Salinger, William Styron or John Updike which were appreciated by critics. [16]

However, the social critics and even the Beatniks did not influence the post-war society very much. After the long years of the war and crisis the society did not want to admit political or social problems. Americans were focused on their families, personal aims and they were proud of their material success instead. On the one hand, there were those who lived in comfort and financial security and those who lived in poverty on the other. [17]

Under the presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower the foundations of revolution in racial relations were laid. He was determined to defend civil rights and during the first three years of his presidency racial segregation in public service in Washington, D. C. was abolished. However, he doubted that this situation could be changed by laws. At that time human rights were rather defended by courts than by laws. [18]

In 1955 in Alabama, after the arrest of a black dressmaker Rosa Parks who refused to give up her seat on a bus for a white man, a new movement for civil rights under the leadership of a local pastor Martin Luther King junior was formed. In reaction to this affair, they started to

boycott buses. His attitude was non-violent even though his home was attacked and his family threatened by racially motivated individuals. The movement managed to have this case heard at federal court. Moreover, it was won and the tribunal decided that the principle “separate but equal” could not be considered a correct interpretation of the law. But this was just a first step to remove the system of humiliating black people. In 1957, from the initiative of Eisenhower, the Civil Rights Act was approved and in the next two years the commission for human rights under the Department of Justice was founded. This commission was in charge of the supervision of universal suffrage. [19]

2.2 Origin and Meaning of the Word “Beat”

Before analyzing the Beat Generation more in detail, it would be appropriate to explain the origin and various possible meanings of the word “Beat” in this context.

The first person Kerouac heard using the word “Beat” was a poet and a thief from Times Square Herbert Huncke. He used this word in the context of weariness. His favourite phrase was: *“Man, I’m beat!”* However, Kerouac started to be interested in other possible meanings of this word. For him it was the characteristics of people whom he identified with— the weary and marginalized. It meant being poor, sleeping in the subway but also being enlightened. [20]

Later, in 1948, John Clellon Holmes asked Kerouac how he would characterize this expression. Kerouac recalled Huncke’s words and answered: *“You know, this is really a beat generation.”* [21] In 1952 Holmes used this word in a famous article *“This is the Beat Generation”* in the New York Times. He declared that the word “Beat” in this context meant a generation that was weary of conventions around the world. Thanks to this article, the word penetrated the public consciousness. [22]

“Beat” can mean weariness or condemnation of conformist society and material values. However, in reality, Kerouac gave this word a

positive and even a spiritual meaning. Since 1954 “Beat” was connected with the Buddhist beatitude and later the Catholic beatitude (because of Kerouac’s Catholic childhood). This connection with spirituality was introduced because Kerouac wanted to set himself apart from young delinquents and rebels who were inspired by movies *The Wild One* and *Blackboard Jungle*. Kerouac reminded the spirituality of “Beat” especially after 1957 when the Beat Generation started to draw the public attention. Unfortunately, Kerouac soon realised that his intentions were in general misunderstood and often distorted. [23]

In an interview for Canadian television the host asked Kerouac what the Beat Generation meant to him. He replied by saying that he imagined an old man who said “Beat” about himself. He meant weary, devastated. He stressed that there was a connection with the beat of a drum and religion. However, after that he said that the name was actually not so important. [24]

Another issue is the term “Beatnik”. This blend was created by the columnist of the San Francisco Chronicle Herb Caen. It emerged from the word “sputnik” and the Slavic suffix “-nik”. [25]

However, this designation was not very popular among the members of the Beat Generation. Ginsberg said about “Beatnik” that this word was pejorative and it only brought semantic problems that irritated everyone. [26]

2.3 Basic Characteristics of the Beat Generation

At the end of the Second World War Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, William Burroughs and other writers and artists formed a kind of a movement which came to maturity in the fifties and became very influential during the sixties. The Beat Generation is generally considered to be a movement; nevertheless, they lack a common platform. The work of each one of them influenced the style and approach of others. [27]

The Cambridge Dictionary defines members of the Beat Generation as:

“young people who did not follow accepted principles and customs but who thought personal experience was more important” [28]

The Beat movement was centred in New York’s Greenwich Village, in San Francisco’s North Beach and in Los Angeles’ Venice West. They were generally apolitical. Their aim was to liberate poetry from academic precision and bring it closer to people [29]. They revived an interest in public readings by taking their poetry to jazz clubs, galleries and cafés. [30]

The Beat movement emerged from disapproval of American society. They expressed their disagreement by exposing themselves and their feelings. For the Beat movement their literary work was of equal importance as their lifestyle. At that time Beatniks were actually regarded as insane and they had to face censure, mockery, being sent to psychiatric hospitals or even to prisons. However, these obstacles did not discourage them because they were attracted to a certain kind of madness. They considered madness to be a refuge for those who wanted to remain personally sane. [31]

The Beats sought for solution of problems within themselves rather than within society. Their way of life comprised of taking psychedelic drugs, drinking alcohol, having unrestricted sex, jazz, Buddhism and street life in ghettos [32]. Drugs were considered to be a key to the spiritual world. The Beats especially used benzedrine and marijuana. [33]

An important thing for the Beats was their interest in Afro-American jazz music and culture of that time. Members of the Beat Generation were fascinated by black culture because they thought that the blacks were freer and less limited by restrictions of normal America. They even adopted some of the expressions the Blacks used. As an example we can mention words like *dig*, *cool*, *man*, or *split*. [34]

The Beatniks were fascinated by everyone who managed to be different and lived beyond the system and especially beyond the law. They were riveted by lives of criminals because they believed that people who were in prison experienced an essential liberation from the system. [35]

The literature of the Beats was inspired by American transcendentalism, existentialism and French symbolists such as Rimbaud and Baudelaire. [36] [37]

2.4 Main Representatives

As stated above, the core of the Beat movement was basically formed by three writers: Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac and William Burroughs. However, before analysing them in detail, it would be appropriate to at least mention the names of some other Beatniks as Gregory Corso, Michael McClure, Philip Whalen, Gary Snyder, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Anne Waldman or Diane DiPrima. [38]

2.4.1 Allen Ginsberg

Allen Ginsberg (1926-1997) grew up in Peterson in New Jersey with his father Louis Ginsberg, a teacher of English and a poet, and his mother Naomi Ginsberg who was mentally unstable and repeatedly placed in mental hospital. [39]

Initially Ginsberg studied economics at Columbia University because he intended to help working-class people. Later, when he started to be interested in poetry, his friend Lucien Carr encouraged him to write poems, however his father was very critical of his early work [40]. During his studies, he made friends with Kerouac and Burroughs. After leaving the University, he travelled and had a large number of occupations. He worked for example as a welder, a window washer or a market researcher. [41]

Howl was the first Ginsberg's published work. This poem, published in 1956, deals with the despair and disillusion of Ginsberg's generation [42]. It also covers the themes of homosexuality, drug addiction, Buddhism and his aversion to materialist society. [43]

Publishing the poem brought the poet and publisher Lawrence Ferlinghetti to court, as he was accused of distributing obscene material. Later, in 1957, Ferlinghetti was acquitted in a landmark decision. [44]

Among his other famous poems we can mention *Kaddish*, in which Ginsberg deals with his mother's mental illness, or poetry volumes called *Empty Mirror* and *Reality Sandwiches*. [45]

Ginsberg's poetry is spontaneous, non-literary and based on everyday reality. The sentence structure is often identical to the flow of thoughts. [46]

2.4.2 Jack Kerouac

Jack Kerouac (1922-1969), born in Lowell in Massachusetts, was the leader and the father of the Beat Generation. His mother tongue was not English but joul, which is a Canadian dialect of French. His childhood was marked by the loss of his brother and later his father. Due to these events the relationship with his mother and his inclination to religion became very strong. [47]

His first novel *The Town and the City* was published in 1950. It received favourable reviews; however, it was not selling very well [48]. *The Town and the City* is a family tragedy partly autobiographical inspired by Kerouac's childhood. [49]

His most famous novel called *On the Road* was published in 1957, although it had already been written in 1951. The novel was written within three weeks in one long paragraph on a 75 metre-long paper scroll. It was not a surprise to him that the publisher refused to publish his work [50]. *On the Road* describes the road trips of young people who enjoy life, jazz,

drugs, sex, freedom and speed. The novel is again partly autobiographical and inspired mainly by Neal Cassady (called Dean Moriarty in *On the Road*) and other friends of Kerouac. To publish *On the Road*, the publishing house had to make huge changes to the original text. They added punctuation, changed the real names of characters for fictitious ones and shortened the whole story. [51]

On the Road brought Kerouac fame, however he was not satisfied because he thought it was for a wrong reason. The readers did not pay attention to his writing but to the nonconformist hipster characters. Kerouac felt that this misunderstanding was caused by his label of the Beatnik. [52]

On the Road is for sure Kerouac's most famous book; nevertheless, he wrote a large number of others. His novel *Visions of Cody*, written in 1951-1952 and published in 1972, was an experimental prose inspired once again by Neal Cassady. The text included transcripts of Kerouac's and Cassady's conversations. Among his other works we can mention *Doctor Sax*, *Mexico City Blues*, *The Dharma Bums*, *The Subterraneans* or *Big Sur*. [53]

2.4.3 William Burroughs

William Burroughs (1914-1997) grew up in a wealthy family in St. Louis. All his life he was an avowed homosexual and a strong drug addict (he mainly took morphine and heroin). Burroughs stays the less known figure of the Beat movement. He lived a life of a renegade in isolation. [54]

Burroughs studied literature, linguistics and anthropology at Harvard University and also medicine in Vienna which encouraged his later interest in psychology and pathology of human decay. After graduation, he moved to New York where he met Ginsberg and Kerouac. Burroughs familiarized them with modern and European writers and they discussed the work of authors such as Blake, Rimbaud, Kafka or Eliot. At

that time he also met his future wife, Joan Vollner Adams, who was later accidentally shot when he was trying to perform the famous William Tell trick. Burroughs was jailed for a short time and later released on bail. [55]

A year after Joan's death Burroughs wrote *Junky*. The book, published under the nom de plume William Lee, deals with drug addiction and isolation. Thanks to Allen Ginsberg, who was impressed by his work, this controversial book was published. [56]

After the book was published, Burroughs lived alternately in Tangier and travelled around South America to find a drug called *yage*. This experience influenced him while writing *Naked Lunch*. In 1956, Kerouac and Ginsberg visited Burroughs in Tangier and helped him to complete and rewrite the manuscript of *Naked Lunch*. [57]

Burroughs' novels are complicated and composed of fast changing scenes. Setting switches and characters change or disappear without an explanation. In his novels we can find characters probably originating from sci-fi [58]. The main message of his work is to warn against controlling freedom and a world which is being manipulated by robots [59]. His work is considered controversial, shocking and even pornographic mainly because of its sexual explicitness and frankness about his drug addiction experience. [60]

2.5 Formation of the Beat Generation

The place where the Beats first met was the apartment of Eddie Parker in New York. Kerouac lived with her in 1944. In the spring of that year he met Allen Ginsberg, William Burroughs and Lucien Carr. It did not take a long time and this apartment became a place where they had their first meetings, read books, fell in love, talked about their ideals or tried drugs. [61] [62]

Lucien Carr, Burroughs' friend, became a link among the Beats. Carr met Burroughs thanks to Dave Kammerer who was a former

university professor. He fell in love with Carr and chased him everywhere he went. This situation escalated in August 1944 when Carr murdered his stalker because he had tried to rape him. He stabbed Kammerer with a knife and then threw his body into the Hudson River. It was Kerouac who helped him to get rid of the murder weapon. However, they were both arrested the next day. It was Eddie Parker who bailed Kerouac out of prison. [63]

This incident was very important for the Beats. It sort of intensified the relations inside the group and ensured the first publicity. Thanks to this crime Kerouac came to realize that his life and lives of his friends could be a subject of art as any other fiction. [64]

In 1946 Kerouac met Neal Cassady – the future protagonist of his next two novels. Cassady came to New York with his 16-year-old wife LuAnne Henderson. Carr was in a certain way replaced by Cassady in being a role model. Cassady grew up in a shantytown in Denver with his father who was an alcoholic. As a child he used to steal cars and stay in reformatories and prisons. His speech was very dynamic and thrilling. He was constantly insisting on Kerouac's teaching him to write. Kerouac in turn recognized the restless part of himself in Cassady who wrote him long letters in which he encouraged him to discover America by being on the road. [65] [66]

In 1947 Kerouac hitchhiked to the west to visit Cassady. He felt that his experiences with Cassady could be a material for a story but his trip to Denver was a disappointment. However, thanks to the trip, Kerouac came to realise that the form of his writing (at that time he was writing *The Town and the City*) was constricted and it could not capture the natural flow of thoughts. [67] Again, it was Cassady who inspired him by an extensive forty-page letter written in one long continuous sentence. [68]

While Kerouac was influenced by Cassady, Allen Ginsberg was initially influenced by Herbert Huncke. He used to write short stories and read them to Ginsberg. Because of him he was also arrested but later

released and sent to psychiatric hospital where he met Carl Solomon – another very influential person in his life [69]. Later Ginsberg dedicated to him his most famous poem *Howl*. [70]

Kerouac encouraged Ginsberg to take an interest in Buddhism. He started to study Japanese and Chinese art and he became to be interested mainly in Zen because its essence is to exhaust words so that a new vision of the world could be reached [71]. Buddhism is also reflected in his poetry. There is a tradition of spontaneous creation in Tibetan, Chinese and Japanese poetry which Ginsberg identified with. [72]

It is hard to talk about the formation of this movement while for example Ginsberg himself claimed that there was no such a thing as the “Beat Generation”. According to him there was just a group of diverse and unique authors who were linked to each other by this stereotype designation invented by the media. [73]

2.6 Influence of the Beat Generation on Society and Culture in the USA

The Beatniks were the first to protest against conformity and to warn about the lack of social and cultural aspects of Americans’ lives. They became pioneers of counterculture and their protest had huge political consequences even though this movement was rather social and cultural. [74]

Social changes started to escalate in the 1960s. At that time people who were born in post-war population explosion were maturing. They differed from the older generation because they did not have any experience with economic crisis or war and they were raised under the influence of television and consumer culture. [75]

2.6.1 The New Left and Hippies

In the sixties two students' movements emerged: The New Left and the counterculture of the 1960s. The New Left was unified by Tom Hayden, who was inspired by Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*, and Al Haber. This movement emphasized mainly a lack of individual freedom. They claimed that the organizational structures such as government offices, municipal offices or universities were aimed to suppress an individual. Later, they started to protest against the Vietnam War. This movement was later divided into several opposition fractions and one of them, the Weatherman, became very radical. This organization was responsible for violence, destruction and killing of a large number of innocent people during 1969 and 1970. [76]

On the other hand, there was the counterculture of the Hippies who were the direct successors to the Beats. The name "hippies" is derived from "hip" which was a term applied to the Beatniks. The Hippies also protested against the Vietnam War, however, they were not directly engaged in politics as their counterparts Yippies (Youth International Party). The Hippie movement soon spread to other countries such as Canada and Great Britain. [77]

The Hippies wore long hair, blue jeans, tie-dyed fabric shirts and sandals. Among women long dresses in psychedelic colours were very popular. Men grew beards and both men and women wore rimless "granny glasses". [78]

The Hippies, also called flower children, did not recognize violence and advocated peace and love. As the Beats, they often lived together in communities, practised Buddhism and open sexual relationships. The Hippies propagated the recreational use of hallucinogenic drugs such as marijuana and LSD which they considered to be a way of expanding consciousness. [79]

As Kerouac and Ginsberg were the leading figures of the Beat movement, Ken Kesey was the spokesman of the Hippies. Kesey, with his group called the Merry Pranksters, organized bus tours across the United States. The bus called Furthur was driven by the main protagonist of Kerouac's *On the Road* Neal Cassady. This journey actually signified a transition from the Beat Generation to the Hippies [80]. In fact, Ken Kesey and Merry Pranksters held rock music happenings between 1965 and 1966 and familiarized participants with the effects of LSD which was not prohibited until 1966. [81]

One of the most significant Hippies' happenings was for sure the Woodstock music festival. Open-air rock concerts were extremely popular among them and Woodstock was probably the biggest and the most famous. It was held in August 1969 in the state of New York. About 400,000 participants comprised mostly young people enjoyed rock music and cheap marijuana for three days. [82]

As mentioned above, the values of the Hippies are actually very similar to those of the Beats. Ginsberg himself said in an interview that for him and Kerouac ecology was a very important subject [83]. There can be found many other similarities with the Beatniks, for example using drugs to enrich the reality, unrestricted attitude to sex, living in communities or practising Buddhism.

2.6.2 Influence on Rock Music

The newly formed music style called rock'n'roll, which brought fame to Elvis Presley, was only another expression of a desire to break the conformity of society in the 1950s. [84]

The literary work of the Beats influenced a large number of musicians. One of them was a folksinger Bob Dylan who was once called the greatest poet of the second half of the 20th century by Allen Ginsberg [85]. Dylan was fascinated by Beat poetry. He admired Kerouac's *Mexico City Blues* and *On the Road*. He translated the moral character of the

Beat Generation into rock'n'roll [86]. He was a singer of protest songs as well as personal nature songs. During his career he has been awarded Grammy Award, Academy Award, Pulitzer Prize, he was introduced to Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and in 2016 he became a Nobel Prize for Literature winner [87]. Another famous folksinger was Joan Baez who helped Bob Dylan at the beginning of his career. She was also a political activist and participated in anti-Vietnam War demonstrations. [88]

In the United Kingdom, the famous band the Beatles emerged in the 1960s. They chose a part of their name as an intentional tribute to the Beat Generation [89]. In 1967, when they released the album *Magical Mystery Tour*, they referred to the journey of the bus Furthur and the Merry Pranksters. The song *Strawberry Fields Forever*, composed by John Lennon, was inspired by psychedelic rock. [90]

Rock music takes mainly the revolt against society and conformism from the Beat Generation. In the sixties the Vietnam War was an important topic. This aspect is visible in a large number of Bob Dylan's lyrics (for example one of his most famous songs *Blowin' in the Wind*) or at Joan Baez. Janis Joplin's aversion to consumer society is expressed in the song *Mercedes Benz* which she wrote with the Beat poet Michael McClure [91] and we could name many other artists and songs.

2.6.3 The Rights of Homosexuals

The Beatniks were the first who were not afraid to admit open homosexuality. Ginsberg talked about it in his poems, Burroughs was an avowed homosexual and even Cassady admitted to a gay experience. [92]

In the 1960s the liberal atmosphere finally encouraged homosexuals to organise themselves and claim the right to be treated justly and generally respected. At that time police carried out raids and tried to close the places where homosexuals gathered. However, the bar owners in Greenwich Village defended themselves. Hundreds of

homosexuals and their sympathizers joined this battle. After a weekend of riots a common organisation came to existence – The Gay Liberation Front.

Very soon this movement spread across the United States. One of their main aims was to encourage people not to hide their different sexual orientation and to come out. It was not an easy decision because at that time homosexuals were discriminated at work, they were excluded from military and civil service and sometimes had to face even physical violence.

Even though it was a hard decision, by 1973 more than 800 gay and lesbian organisations existed in the United States. Every bigger city had its own visible homosexual community.

In 1973 homosexuality ceased to be diagnosed as a mental deviation and in 1974 homosexuals could be accepted for civil service. [93]

2.6.4 Feminism

In the 1960s the feminist movement became stronger. Women challenged the stereotype of being mere housewives which was common during the 1950s. Betty Friedan wrote a famous book *The Feminine Mystique* which became a bestseller.

The aim of feminists was to abolish discrimination at work, legalize abortions and gain the promotion of kindergartens from federal and state institutions. [94]

However, the Beatniks were rather homosexually orientated. Ginsberg was afraid of women and Burroughs openly declared hatred towards them. We can assume that they generally disrespected bourgeois housewives but they did not do much for feminists. [95]

Nevertheless there was a group of female authors often called the Beat Women which, as the Beatniks, fought against conformity and rigidity of moral standards and quietly prepared the sexual revolution in 1960s. [96]

We can mention Carolyn Cassady, Neal Cassady's wife, who wrote a book called *Off the Road* about her life with Cassady, Kerouac and Ginsberg [97], Joyce Johnson's *Minor Characters*, Kerouac's daughter Jan Kerouac who wrote *Baby Driver*, or poets Diane DiPrima and Elise Cowen. [98]

2.6.5 Liberation of Literature

In the 1950s the literary work of the Beatniks was not accepted by the general public very well. There was much criticism because of the form but mainly because of the content. In *Naked Lunch*, *Howl* and *On the Road* the authors defied the rules of literal form and gave a courageous answer to passivity of that time. [99]

As authors, the Beatniks were most often ignored, tolerated or disrespected. Kerouac could not publish his novel *On the Road*, written in 1951, until 1957 because it did not meet the requirements of editors and publishers. Even though Kerouac became famous, it was in spite of the literary establishment [100]. *On the Road* had some favourable criticisms but the reviewers, who did not like the book, highlighted the absence of plot line or criticised praising anti-social behaviour. [101]

A few months after publishing the *Howl*, in October 1957, Ferlinghetti was arrested and accused of violating the California Code of Morality [102]. The public was filled with indignation because of explicit homosexual content. The series of trials continued and finally ended in 1961 with the lawsuit concerning Burroughs' *Naked Lunch*. All these trials led to the liberation of literature and gained the Beatniks publicity. [103]

The trial of Burroughs' *Naked Lunch*, which took place in Boston, played an important role in restricting censorship. The novel, published in the United States in 1962, was almost immediately interdicted due to its obscenity [104]. The decision was changed in 1966 thanks to Norman Mailer, Allen Ginsberg and others who testified to the book's social and artistic value.

During the trial, Norman Mailer said the following:

"We are richer for that record; and we are more impressive as a nation because a publisher can print that record and sell it in an open bookstore, sell it legally. It even offers a hint that the "Great Society," which Lyndon Johnson speaks of, may not be merely a politician's high wind, but indeed may have the hard seed of a new truth; for no ordinary society could have the bravery and moral honesty to stare down into the abyss of NAKED LUNCH. But a Great Society can look into the chasm of its own potential Hell and recognize that it is stronger as a nation for possessing an artist who can come back from Hell with a portrait of its dimensions." [105]

The decision of the court was reversed in 1966 and *Naked Lunch* stayed the last fully censored literary work in the United States [106]. This decision meant that from now any author does not have to censure himself while writing a work of art.

Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg believed themselves to be the liberators of America from uniformity because they stimulated an interest in mysticism, ecology, old civilizations, freedom of expression and sexual minorities in their literary work. However, the critics look on the activities of the Beat movement as the beginning of a destructive process which led to drug addiction, AIDS, promiscuity, disintegration of family, growth of criminality, pornography and contempt for authority. [107]

After indicating all the social and cultural spheres of influence of the Beat Generation it is nearly impossible to deny its merits. Their literature and lifestyle changed the face of the conservative 1950s and helped to liberate not only literature but also society. The question of criticism of the Beat Generation will be dealt with more in detail in the practical section of the thesis.

2.7 The Czech Beat Generation

2.7.1 Beat Lifestyle

When talking about the Beat Generation in former Czechoslovakia, it is important to distinguish the influence of the Beatniks on young Czechoslovaks from Czechoslovak Beat literature. Exaggeratedly, we can say that everyone was influenced by the Beat lifestyle. Young people in Czechoslovakia were looking for a new kind of culture which would not be affected by the communist ideology. Hitchhiking, poetry recitations accompanied by jazz (very often poems by the Beatniks) and rock'n'roll were very popular at that time. Beat poetry was available in Czechoslovakia until 1965 in the magazine *Světová literatura*. [108]

Unfortunately, the situation changed after Allen Ginsberg visited Prague in 1965. During a traditional Czechoslovak university celebration called Majales, Ginsberg was crowned its king by Czechoslovak students. Ginsberg's visit ended when somebody handed his diary to the police. Ginsberg was accused of abusing Czechoslovak hospitality, violating good manners and eventually deported. [109]

*“For I was arrested thrice in Prague, once for singing drunk on
Narodni street,
once knocked down on the midnight pavement by a mustached agent
who screamed out BOUZERANT,
once for losing my notebooks of unusual sex politics dream opinions,
and I was sent from Havana by planes by detectives in green uniform,*

and I was sent from Prague by plane by detectives in Czechoslovakian business suits,[...]" [110]

This poem called *Kral Majales* was written by Ginsberg on the airplane from Prague to London. [111]

The Beat lifestyle was evident not only in culture and people's opinions but even in their appearance. The image of the Beatniks was for sure disturbing in the United States but in communist Czechoslovakia it was unthinkable. The former regime suppressed any notion of differentness. Inspired by rock music and Beat literature, young men started growing long hair in the middle of the 1960s. The Communist Party launched several campaigns aimed at long-haired people. They were forced to have their long hair cut, fined for offence and sometimes even imprisoned. [112]

Long hair was worn by members of diverse subcultures but there was a feeling of mutual solidarity among them [113]. These people were voluntarily marginalized just as the members of the Beat Generation. It was not only because of the regime but also because of disapproval of their fellow citizens.

The Beatniks were (and still are) very popular in the Czechoslovakia. In his article for magazine *Host* Josef Rauwolf wrote that it might be caused by the similar life feeling. The fact is that books by Kerouac, Ginsberg or Burroughs are selling very well and probably will be selling in the future. [114]

2.7.2 Czech Beat Literature

As I have mentioned above, it is necessary to differentiate the influence of the American Beatniks on people's lifestyle and Beat literature itself. It is for sure that some of the Czechoslovak writers and poets were influenced by the Beatniks but in many cases their work is not considered to be Beat literature.

2.7.2.1 Václav Hrabě and Other Authors

Václav Hrabě (1940-1965) is often called the only Czechoslovak Beat poet, however not all authors agree on that. Hrabě is the author of poems and prose whose work was not published until his tragic death. There were some similarities between him and the Beatniks. His poetry was strongly influenced by jazz and blues. Besides that, Hrabě was a typical Beatnik by his lifestyle of a voluntary outsider. [115]

Hrabě's name is connected with the wine bar Viola where, along other authors, the poetry of the Beatniks was recited, often accompanied by jazz. It was also a place where Hrabě first read his own poetry in public. This was another connection between him and the Beat poets among whom the public readings were also popular. [116]

Václav Hrabě met Allen Ginsberg when he visited Prague in 1965 and interviewed him. It was the height of his career of a journalist. [117]

The large public was familiarized with Hrabě's poetry when it was set to music by Vladimír Mišík in the 1970s. His poem called *Variace na renesanční téma* became a radio hit. [118]

However, it is important to mention that Hrabě was not inspired solely by the Beatniks but also by the tradition of Czech poetry. That is the reason why his label of the Beatnik is very often questioned. [119]

Other authors sometimes associated with the Czech Beat Generation are for example Ladislav Landa, a poet who committed a suicide when he was only seventeen years old, or Milan Koch, whose work was inspired by Allen Ginsberg. [120]

2.7.2.2 The Underground

During the 1970s and the 1980s the Czech underground formed an opposition to the Bolshevik establishment and the society [121]. The main

activities of the underground were publishing samizdat, poetry collections, magazine called *Vokno* and organizing concerts. [122]

The Czech underground might be considered as a counterpart to the American Beat Generation. Of course, the political situation in former communist Czechoslovakia could not be more different from the situation in the United States but the Czech underground and the Beatniks have much in common.

The term underground means living and creating on a margin of a society which meant something slightly different in the West than in the East. The Western artists expressed their feelings about the mainstream culture and society whereas the Eastern ones, because of the regime, formed a real underground where they were forced to hide. [123]

The father of the Czech underground, Ivan Martin Jirous, defined it as an attempt to create the second culture which would not depend on the establishment in contrast to the Western underground whose aim was the direct destruction of the establishment. [124]

The main feature of the Czech underground was its illegality. Despite the fact that all the events took place secretly, many people were arrested. However, the Czech underground did not fight for human rights or Czech nation as some people thought. They fought for freedom of an individual which they had in common with the Beatniks. Another similarity was that the underground was apolitical. Nevertheless, they were suspicious for the Bolsheviks even though they did not form any resistance movement. Ironically, this made them political to some degree. [125]

As stated above, the situation in Czechoslovakia was very different from that in the United States, however struggle for freedom of an individual and departure from the establishment were present in both of them.

3 PRACTICAL SECTION

3.1 Background on Josef Rauwolf

As a part of the practical section of my bachelor's thesis I interviewed translator, journalist and expert on the Beat Generation Josef Rauwolf.

Rauwolf was born in Cheb in 1953. He became interested in the Beat Generation when he was studying at the grammar school in Cheb thanks to the magazine *Světová literatura* which was publishing Beat literature at that time.

After he graduated from the grammar school, he continued his studies at Charles University where he studied library science. Later he became a caretaker which provided him with time needed to translate. During the communist regime he started translating Burroughs' books. His first translations were *Naked Lunch*, *Junky* and *Queer* which he accomplished even before 1989. In 1988 he won a competition for young amateur translators with his translation of *Naked Lunch*. This book had been regarded as untranslatable by then.

"In Odeon they knew that someone had translated a book which they thought was untranslatable. Nobody knew me. So I decided that it would be best to show up there. At that time I had already translated Junky. They told me that they could not publish Naked Lunch, no way. But if they added an afterword of a doctor about drug addiction problems to Junky, it might pass. So I got a testimonial from a psychiatrist from Bohnice who worked with drug addicts and they started to prepare it for publishing. However, then came the November 1989 and it had to be published after the revolution. Nevertheless, they would have published it anyway."

During his career as a translator he translated the literary works of Burroughs (*Nova Express*, *Naked Lunch*, *Junky*, *Queer*, *Yage Letters* and

others), Bukowski (*South of No North*), Kerouac (*The Dharma Bums*, *Visions of Cody*) and other authors such as Hubert Selby or William Gibson. Besides English he also translates from German.

In 2012 he was awarded Josef Jungmann Prize for translation of Kerouac's *Visions of Cody*. When I asked him about this, he marked this book as one of the most demanding he had ever translated.

"It was really hard to translate it. There are so many depictions, language levels. There is this long part where Kerouac transcribes recordings of his and Cassady's dialogues. They were drunk, high, stumbling. They started a sentence but did not finish it. They made innuendoes, puns... It was insane."

Along with *Visions of Cody* he also mentioned translating *Naked Lunch* and *Nova Express* by Burroughs.

"Naked Lunch is a watertight text. Burroughs uses metaphors and depictions which even Americans do not understand – and I had to deal with it. So I decided to write Burroughs a letter and ask him for an explanation. It was already during the former regime. Nova Express was hard because of the cut-up technique. Sometimes you do not know if it is a noun in a plural form or a verb in the third person. You do not know if it is a noun or an adjective. In addition, nearly every word in English has a bunch of possible meanings and Burroughs plays with them. Burroughs himself asked me how I could translate it. I told him that I had tuned up a wave, let's say his wave, and I had made it."

Recently he has finished a translation of John Clellon Holmes' novel *Go!* which was published at the beginning of 2017. Rauwolf describes this novel as a chronicle of the Beat Generation.

"The book is based on Holmes' detailed diary writings. It is fiction, of course, but historical facts are accurate."

During his career, he was a chief editor of the Czech-language edition of *Rolling Stone* and an editor of *Instinkt*. He also wrote a monograph devoted to Jaromír Nohavica. In the future he intends to translate further Burroughs' books and other authors. He chooses himself which authors he wants to translate or the publishing house sometimes contacts him.

“There is still a lot left by Burroughs. I also want to translate some other authors. One always tends emotionally to a certain bunch. I could hardly translate for example Walter Scott. I am very lucky because I do not have to translate for business.”

3.2 Commentary on the Interview

I met Josef Rauwolf on the 7th February 2017 in a Prague café called Jericho. It was a pleasant three-hour meeting during which we discussed a large number of topics ranging from his translations to the legacy of the Beat Generation. He willingly spoke about his professional and personal experiences such as meeting William Burroughs or being friends with Allen Ginsberg.

At the beginning of the meeting, we discussed the position of Beat literature in former Czechoslovakia, conditions of publishing their literary works and general awareness of their literature. Beat poetry was publishable in Czechoslovakia thanks to an effort of authors who made it acceptable for the censorship.

“People were familiar with their literature thanks to Jan Zábřana and his translations and magazine Světová literatura. In 1959, in issue 6, a long essay written by Igor Hájek, an expert in American studies, called Americká bohéma was published. This essay was written very skilfully at that time. To pass the censure, these authors were described as the criticisers of imperialism, capitalism and racism – which, in fact, they were. Thanks to this it could be published. A gimmick was to quote a Soviet scientist. An important thing about this essay was that it was full of

extracts from Howl and other Ginsberg's poems, from Kerouac and other authors. The parts with sexual content were in most cases omitted."

The fact is that information about Beat literature was available to Czechoslovak readers. Zábřana's translation of *Howl* was only the third translation of this poem to another language. The whole text was published in 1969 in *Sešity pro mladou literaturu*. This is where Rauwolf first read it.

"I read it when I was 16 so I was quite young and it caught my attention. I think it is pointless to say why, because there is freedom in their poetry, especially in Ginsberg's or Kerouac's. I think that young people, even those who do not live in Bolshevism, yearn for freedom and a life which the Beats lived."

The situation in former Czechoslovakia regarding Beat literature is issuable. Rauwolf admits that many authors were influenced by the Beatniks; nevertheless their work cannot be considered Beat literature itself. Their lifestyle was undoubtedly Beat but their work was not. When I pointed out the similarities between the underground and the Beat Generation (desire for individual freedom and no interest in politics), he answered the following:

"I would not say that the underground equals the Beatniks but it is sure that these guys [the underground] were influenced by them. They grew up at the time when these texts started being published and they read them. Desire for individual freedom was present in both – the underground and the Beat Generation. However, there are only a few authors whose literary work could be marked as Beat. On the other hand, there were a lot of people who lived like it. This is the problem with Hrabě who is often marked as the Czech Beatnik. This is not true. He lived like it but his work was not Beat. He was inspired by Šotola and others. The only person whose work could be labelled as Beat is Milan Koch who was a guy from the underground. After November 1989 a collection of poems Červená KarKULKA was published. There was a poem called Chrčení za

Kaliopénu whose structure is formally the same as the structure of Howl. It paraphrases Howl in the setting of real socialism. I think that this is not any clone or copy but independent and high-quality poetry.”

We were also discussing his meeting with William Burroughs. He went to visit him in February 1991 while he was in New York and was staying at Allen Ginsberg’s house. He describes them both as very nice and gentle men.

When he was asked if the meeting changed his opinion of Burroughs’ work, he answered the following:

“It is interesting because his work is the way it is – rough, cruel, allegedly pornographic (I don’t agree but people often told me that). Sometimes it is not a pleasant reading material but it is for a good reason. It is no exhibition or desire to shock at any cost. The situation is what it is and it must be described by appropriate words. When I went to visit him, I did not know how I should call him. Mister Burroughs? Master? Genius? His secretary told me to call him just William. He proved to be a nice, helpful, polite and distinguished man, who is not any monster as one might think based on his books. Then he got a little drunk and we had a joint together. He was very emotional.[...] It was a good experience. I felt it from his books, but it is something different when you really speak with the person and you see that he is a nice man. He didn’t have to waste his time – he lost three days with me. I really appreciate it.”

Regarding Allen Ginsberg, who was his friend, Rauwolf stressed mainly his generosity.

“He was very kind and generous. When I went to the USA in 1991, he let me stay at his house and even paid a taxi from the airport for me. Otherwise I do not know where I would have stayed. Every time I was there, he let me stay with him. I had his diary, phone numbers and contacts at my disposal. Allen always said: “My Friend Joseph from Prague has arrived, do you want to meet him?” And the person in

question always came. [...] Allen gave me his books, LPs, CDs. He was really kind. I cannot say it in any other way."

Rauwolf emphasized that Ginsberg stayed the same person whether he was the Beatnik, the face of the Hippie movement or a university professor. He promoted rights of homosexuals by openly avowing his orientation, went to demonstrations and fought with injustice all his life.

Besides rights of homosexuals, he also mentioned a large number of other spheres of influence of the Beat Generation.

"Allen promoted rights of homosexuals already in the 1950s even though it has never been conceded. Another issue is that the Beatniks brought poetry and literature to the streets. They read their poetry in cafés, wine bars, and pubs but also in the streets. They combined music and poetry (jazz, folk and later rock). They democratized poetry. Anybody could be a poet. Poetry in the United States at that time was very academic and conservative. Ginsberg and others wrote about ordinary people, their generation, their feelings."

Another important matter was an effort of the Beat Generation to curb censure. Rauwolf added that besides that, the trials with *Naked Lunch* and *Howl* gained them desirable popularity across the country.

"When Allen published Howl he was hoping that the censure would go after it. He knew that it would be great advertising. And it was. There were articles not only in San Francisco but also in The New York Times. The press was at their side. It was PR for free – the state paid for that."

Even though the trials with *Naked Lunch* and *Howl* were won, the tendency to censure continued in the 1980s and the 1990s. It did not apply to publishing but for example to the radio broadcasting of *Howl* before 10 p.m. Allen Ginsberg, in fact, fought with censorship all his life.

Talking about social criticism, Rauwolf claims that the members of the Beat Generation were not doing anything unusual or antisocial. Unlike the mainstream society, the Beatniks were not ashamed and did not hide. They were only breaking taboos as they did in their literature.

“They were not more promiscuous than other people in the USA. I have no illusions that society would be less promiscuous without them. Unlike them, they only did not do it secretly. They said that man is free and should get rid of all taboos. Besides that I do not think that they were promiscuous at all. They were mainly breaking taboos - for example regarding homosexuals. It is a fact that they said that drugs should not be criminalised but they had never promoted the use of hard drugs. Even Burroughs, who was addicted to heroin for 15 years, did not say that it was great. Allen Ginsberg was for hallucinogenic drugs, however, Burroughs claimed that was only another way to control people.”

While we were discussing the future of Beat literature, Rauwolf was very optimistic about it. It is understandable because an unflagging interest can be observed in many areas. The publishing houses are still interested in translating and publishing their books. Young people are still attracted to their literature which is noticeable when Rauwolf gives lectures at Grammar Schools or when students contact him and ask for help with their seminar work or theses. He is sure that even a great amount of theoretical and academic works cannot prevent young people from reading their literature.

“Young people always long for freedom, free expression and life without restrictions (political, economic, social, sexual, police or legal). That is what they find in the literature of the Beat Generation. So I am not afraid that the interest will fade. Besides that, for example Burroughs’ texts are now topical in our society where populism and nationalism are spreading.”

3.3 Comparison of Viewpoints

The meeting with Josef Rauwolf provided my thesis with another point of view and a large amount of complementary information. In many areas Rauwolf agreed with the sources I worked with, however, in some areas he did not. The main differences are indicated below.

His opinion differed from the sources most while we were discussing William Burroughs. He tends to be described as an avowed homosexual, a drug addict and a renegade. However, in the interview Rauwolf described him as a gentleman and a very emotional person. This proves that Burroughs' work and even his personality is probably often misunderstood and regarded with prejudice. Rauwolf admits that Burroughs might have been controversial. However, he remained a gentleman.

An interesting point was made by Rauwolf while talking about the Beatniks in relation to women. He did not agree that Allen Ginsberg or William Burroughs were afraid of them or even declared hatred towards them, except for Kerouac who was strongly affected by his mother.

"Ginsberg had always respected women and Burroughs, except for a short misogynous period, too. After all he was married and had a son. Kerouac had it difficult with women because of his mother who symbolized goodness for him. Other women did not mean much to him. He did not treat them in a nice way."

However, regarding feminism and the Beat Women, Rauwolf agreed that was is evident that the women among the Beatniks were disadvantaged.

"It was a paradox. Women, especially in this bunch, had it difficult at that time. Men were constantly talking about an individual freedom whereas women were supposed to stay at home and cook. Women writers were unacceptable for them."

This means that the Beat Women had to fight for their individual freedom and rights themselves, even though, according to Rauwolf, they were respected by the other Beatniks.

Talking about controversy related to the Beat Generation, Rauwolf had a clear position. He declared that the Beatniks had not misled society as some critics might claim. They were only honest about what they were doing which was at that time unacceptable, even though the others were doing the same – only secretly. This indicates that they did not only curb the censorship in literature but also helped to break social taboos.

The issuable fact is that the Beatniks claimed that drugs should not be criminalised. Allen Ginsberg himself engaged in legalizing marijuana, however, according to Rauwolf, the Beatniks did not ever promoted use of hard drugs. Regarding psychedelic drugs, the situation was different, because for example Allen Ginsberg was for legalization. It is evident that there is much controversy about the Beat Generation; however, it is for sure that their contribution to liberation of literature and society is incontestable and very important even up to the present.

Regarding the second section of my work, which analyses the Czech Beat Generation and the underground, Rauwolf did not agree with classifying Václav Hrabě among the Czech Beatniks. He pointed out that Hrabě had been influenced by the Beatniks; however, his literary work was not Beat. Rauwolf marked a poet Milan Koch as the only Czech Beatnik thanks to his variation on *Howl* called *Chrčení za Kaliopénu*. According to Rauwolf, it is necessary to distinguish the Beat Generation from the Beats. The Beat Generation included the writers whereas the Beats only sympathized with them and did not write. This distinction is often ignored and therefore the disputes arise.

Generally, it can be assumed that the viewpoints of Josef Rauwolf were similar with the sources that were used except for a few issuable cases. The main contribution of the interview for the thesis was his

personal and professional experience which he willingly discussed with me in detail.

4 CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that the Beat Generation is now considered an important part of the history of literature, however, it must be remembered that its spheres of influence were much broader. The aim of this thesis was to show its impacts on society and culture in the historical context of the 1950s in the USA in comparison with the Czech Beat Generation and the underground.

It proved that the influence of the Beat Generation can be retraced in a large number of areas. The 1960s in the USA were a period of a social change in many aspects and one of the impulses for this was for sure Beat literature. Exaggeratedly, it can be assumed that the traces of the Beat movement were noticeable everywhere. They provoked the birth of the Hippie movement or inspired a large number of folk and rock musicians ranging from The Beatles to Bob Dylan

They were promoting rights of homosexuals already from the 1950s when being a homosexual was a stigma. They were breaking taboos not only by openly declaring that they were homosexuals but also by living their lives differently which made them controversial for the mainstream society.

One of their most important merits to culture and society is that they managed to curb the censorship by winning the obscenity trials regarding their literature which provided all future authors with freedom of expression in their work. The trials with *Naked Lunch* and *Howl* were actually the last trials held with literature.

Regarding Czech Beat literature, the situation proved to be considerably more complicated. The authors do not agree in many areas but the fact is that Beat literature was not numerous in former Czechoslovakia and the connection with the original Beat Generation was rather inspiration and lifestyle than literature itself.

The practical section of my thesis was devoted to the analysis of the interview with translator, journalist and expert on the Beat Generation Josef Rauwolf. The interview provided my thesis with Rauwolf's professional and personal experiences regarding the Beatniks and Beat literature and challenged the technical literature. In many areas he agreed with my sources, however, in some areas his point of view differed. These differences are mentioned in the last chapter of the thesis.

There still remains much information that could be studied and added to this thesis. For example a more detailed additional chapter focused on the influence of the Beat Generation on rock musicians such as David Bowie, who was influenced by Burroughs' cut-up technique, Iggy Pop, Lou Reed or Kurt Cobain.

Nevertheless, the aim of this thesis was to provide at least a summary of history and legacy of the Beat Generation, introduce briefly its main representatives and compare the American Beat Generation with the underground and the Beat movement in Czechoslovakia.

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7 ABSTRACT

My bachelor's thesis is aimed at the literary movement called the Beat Generation which emerged after the Second World War in the USA in reaction to social situation at that time. The aim of this thesis is to analyze the Beat Generation and its representatives focusing on their impact on society and culture in the USA and compare it with their influence on the underground and the Beat movement in former Czechoslovakia.

My thesis is divided into two sections – theoretical and practical. At the beginning of the theoretical section there is a description of the 1950s in the USA, basic characteristics of the Beat Generation, explanation of the word “Beat” in this context, introduction of its main representatives and finally a summary of their spheres of influence. In the practical section there is an analysis of an interview with Josef Rauwolf who is journalist, translator and expert on the Beat Generation. The aim of the interview was to compare his professional and personal viewpoint concerning this issue with the technical literature and other resources.

With this thesis I wanted to point out that the spheres of influence of the Beat Generation were considerably broad and their legacy is noticeable until these days in many fields.

8 RESUMÉ

Moje bakalářská práce je zaměřena na literární hnutí Beat Generation, které vzniklo ve Spojených státech po druhé světové válce v reakci na tehdejší společenské klima. Cílem této práce je analyzovat Beat Generation a její hlavní představitele se zaměřením na jejich vliv na společnost a kulturu v USA a porovnat ho s jejich vlivem na underground a Beatnické hnutí v bývalém Československu.

Práce je rozdělena na dvě části: teoretickou a praktickou. V úvodu teoretické části je popis společenské a politické situace v 50. letech ve Spojených státech, základní charakteristika hnutí Beat Generation, vysvětlení slova „Beat“ v tomto kontextu, představení nejdůležitějších autorů a nakonec souhrn oblastí jejich vlivu. Praktickou část tvoří analýza rozhovoru s novinářem, překladatelem a expertem na Beat Generation Josefem Rauwolfem. Cílem rozhovoru bylo srovnat jeho profesní a osobní názory na toto téma s odbornou literaturou a ostatními zdroji, se kterými jsem pracovala.

Touto prací jsem chtěla poukázat na to, že beatnici ovlivnili skutečně širokou škálu oblastí a jejich odkaz je patrný i dnes.