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Female Characters in Kerouac's On the Road

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Prohlášení

Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci vypracovala samostatně a že jsem uvedla všechny použité zdroje a literaturu.

V Olomouci, 15. 4. 2019

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Podpis

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Abstract

The aim of this project is to analyze the portrayal of female characters and their roles in Jack Kerouac's novel *On the Road* (1957). The historical background focusing on the position of women in society together with biographical information about the author creates a theoretical framework for a better understanding of his literary work. The analysis itself examines individual female characters, their roles and relationships with male characters. Based on this analysis, the author came to the conclusion that female characters are described in accordance with general opinion about women's roles in the 1940's.

Introduction

Jack Kerouac may charm even today's readers by his youthful attitude and energetic writing providing an authentic illustration of the Beat Generation, which has always been a symbol of breaking out of stereotypes and monotonous lifestyle. However, this may be true only for his male characters and overall male members of the Beat Generation. If you were a woman at those times, you would still have specific and unequal position and there was not much space left for you. The aim of this project is to analyze the portrayal of female characters and their roles in Jack Kerouac's novel *On the Road* and to justify the statement that he stayed rather stereotypical in the perception of women and their roles in his best-known novel.

The project starts with a brief chapter considering surveys of American literature and presenting a summary of typical interpretations of Jack Kerouac's novels to highlight the fact that women are not a typical object of research in this field. The next chapters are devoted to the background in which Kerouac lived and wrote to better understand the influences that affected his literary works. The second chapter discusses gender roles in the postwar era, which influenced the general opinion about women's position in the society and the third chapter focuses on Kerouac's relationships with women to illustrate his attitude towards them, which is also reflected in the discussed novel. The analysis of *On the Road* is provided in the last chapter, where the author of the project summarized basic features of the novel and then focused thoroughly on characterizing prominent female characters. The emphasis is put on their portrayal, social roles and relationships with male characters. The author of this bachelor's project wishes to provide a new point of view and interpret the novel *On the Road* differently than it is usually done.

1 Interpretations of Kerouac's works in surveys of American literature

Jack Kerouac lived in a men's world, and even though he longed for a happy home and a complete family, he was not able to retain a relationship as he got influenced by his male friends, who inspired him to take long trips around America and live a promiscuous life. This stereotypical point of view prevails in most interpretations of Kerouac's novels and women are usually put in the background.

Many of literary-historical sources probably do not perceive Jack Kerouac as an important author, for example *American Literature*, *American Culture* (Hutner, 1999), where Kerouac is not mentioned at all, or *Literature in America, An Illustrated History* (Conn, 1989) where Jack Kerouac is mentioned only briefly. But even if authors of books about American literature do mention Kerouac, they do not pay attention to female characters in Jack Kerouac's novels at all, some of them briefly mention just very few of them as they are not considered important for interpreting his novels.

The Cambridge History of American Literature (Bercovitch and Patell, 2005) mentions Kerouac's lack of interest in marriage and families, but mostly focuses on the new values set in his novel and on the protagonist, Dean Moriarty. Relating to Dean, the author mentions that the hero's irresponsibility makes women around him suffer. But generally, the interpretation of the novel focuses on the myth that is created from the life on the road. *The Columbia History of the American Novel* (Elliot and Davidson, 1991) mentions that some critics saw Kerouac's *On the Road* as a carefully structured love story but does not explicitly say anything about women. It focuses on the creation of the counterculture within the West. *Columbia Literary History of the United States* (Elliot, 1988) mentions Kerouac very briefly in connection with Allen Ginsberg's poetry.

As for women in Jack Kerouac's life, the most detailed biography is *Memory Babe* (Nicosia, 1996) written by Gerald Nicosia. It not only describes their personalities and relationships with Jack Kerouac, but the author also admits that they played a big role in his life, influenced some of his decisions and were models for many of his characters. He mentions even not so important women to provide authentic and undistorted facts. Another comprehensive biography, *Angel-Headed Hipster* (Turner, 2006) is also aware of women in Jack Kerouac's life. Even though

the author spent most space on the description of his male friends and adventures with them, he briefly mentions important women for understanding Kerouac's novels and their influence.

2 Women's roles in the 1940's

To analyze women's roles in *On the Road*, which is set between 1947 and 1949, we should be aware of the position of women in the society at those times. According to Campbell, the situation in the USA in the 1940's was mainly influenced by two significant events, the Great Depression of the 1930's and the Second World War. (Campbell, 1984, p. 8)

During the Great Depression, the main effort was focused on obtaining food and clothes for a family, on making a home and keeping a stable family. Women did not know what unemployment was, because usually they stayed home and managed household with no wages, so they had no jobs to lose. It was men who earned money and that role was now threatened, which brought a new role to their wives – they were supposed to emotionally support their families and husbands to keep them together. (Campbell, 1984, p. 8)

During the Second World War women's position changed. According to Campbell, the biggest change in traditional view of gender roles came when women were hired as soldiers. They were employed to do mostly the paperwork and other safe tasks, which allowed men to leave offices and participate directly in the war. (Campbell, 1984, p. 19)

Women's husbands, fathers and relatives were mobilized, and the war industry needed new employees. Women were encouraged to do – considering their usual wages – a well-paid “war work” and their previous experiences with housework was presented as an advantage, because they “were thought to excel at repetitive tasks requiring small operations with fine details”. However, their wages were still unequal to men's, who earned much more money for the same work. (McEuen, 2016, p. 2-3) After the war, three quarters of women hoped to keep their jobs in order to become economically less dependent on their husbands. But men coming back from the war reclaimed their old job positions and women's role changed back to the housewife. (May, 1988, p. 76)

In order to support the morality of men during the war, women also volunteered in many fields. The most famous organization of volunteering women was the United Service Organizations. Women participating in this organization were supposed to behave and treat men in a clearly feminine way. Their role was to

entertain men, they should not be smarter than them or too competitive, they were even instructed to let them win in games like table tennis, checkers or cards to support their masculinity and morale. Women should be optimistic and cheerful, leaving their own wishes and interests behind. (McEuen, 2016, p. 6)

Despite the war and participation of women in it, they were still perceived as housewives; their patriotic and family interests were even supported by government and media information campaigns. (Campbell, 1984, p. 224) Unlike in the 1930's, when women were encouraged to accomplish their own goals, in the 1940's they were supposed to postpone their own wishes and be good wives to their husbands coming back home from the war. Men's need of entertainment and relaxation was highlighted and women were the ones who should provide it. Also, they should be attractive and take care of themselves to soothe men's egos. If the woman is attractive, the man will feel special, because she chose him among others. (May, 1988, p. 66)

After the Second World War, during the Cold War, the question of sexuality emerged. In the atmosphere of uncertainty and fear of communism and atomic bombs, any abnormal behavior was considered suspicious. (May, 1988, p. 93) Sex crimes, prostitution, but even homosexuality or premarital sex were considered as "perversions". Women were responsible to prevent these "abnormalities" seen as a "national weakness" by providing a stable home and normal development of their children. In order to achieve this goal and provide a happy family, they were supposed to be good wives at the first place and, among taking care of the household, satisfy their husbands' sexual needs. Men were on the other hand supposed to be dominant, not only economically but also sexually. It was believed that strong men from "sexually fulfilling marriages" were more likely to resist undesirable behavior and, speaking about anti-communist propaganda, even more successful in the fight with communism. Therefore, this perception of women as providers of sexual pleasure was also supported by the official ideology. (May, 1988, p. 96-97) These theories may seem unbelievable for today's readers, but "in the postwar years, these sexual-political assumptions did not seem far-fetched. Foreign policy itself rested on well-articulated assumptions about masculine power – a power drawn from sexual potency as well as the moral strength to resist temptation". (May, 1988, p. 98)

Young marriages were encouraged as premarital sex was disapproved of. Hand in hand with finding their husbands went women's appearance. They were advised to be good looking and to put an effort to be attractive. (May, 1988, p. 103) Even fashion reacted to this demand of sexual attractiveness and women wore dress that underlined their women's curves. (May, 1988, p. 112) Sexual attraction was an important feature while choosing a life partner. (May, 1988, p. 117)

3 Important women in Jack Kerouac's life

To understand Kerouac's books, the reader must firstly understand his life as these two are highly connected. "Kerouac lived to write, and he looked into his own life for what he considered the most indispensable material." (Theado, 2000, p. 25) In the following chapter, the author of this project will provide information about important women in Jack Kerouac's life in order to better understand his background and relationships, that influenced his life and therefore writing.

3.1 Mother

Kerouac's mother was Gabrielle Lévesque, a loving and caring woman, even though she lived a tough life. Her son and Jack's oldest brother, Gerard, suffered from rheumatic fever and lived in pain for two years until his death in 1926. (Nicosia, 1996, p. 26) Despite taking care of her son, Gabrielle stayed strong and besides working she took the role of a good housewife, she kept the house clean, cooked and tried to cheer up her family. Her husband and Jack's father, Leo, did not make it easier for her. He had always had a problem with alcohol and he was regularly losing quite a lot of money at poker or bets, which upset Gabrielle and caused more conflicts. However, Jack's childhood was not only tragic. He experienced good times, because his family was sociable and organized game nights and noisy parties, Gabrielle played the piano, they laughed and sang together. (Nicosia, 1996, p. 29-30)

After Gerard's death, Gabrielle became overprotective and emotionally dependent on her children and after Jack's sister Caroline got married and left home, Gabrielle became attached to fourteen-year-old Jack and they had very strong bond until the rest of their lives. (Nicosia, 1996, p. 32) The bond between mother and son got tighter after Leo died and Jack promised to take care of his mother. As a proof, he always came back home from his travels around America and enjoyed the comfort of being pampered. (Theado, 2000, p. 18, p. 21) As Turner says, one of the reasons why he got married with Joan Haverty and later Stella Sampas could be that he felt that they would take care of his lonely mother. (Turner, 2006, p. 117)

3.2 Mary Carney

Kerouac's first serious relationship was with Mary Carney. He met her at a party in 1939, his last year of Lowell high school. (Turner, 2006, p. 41) Soon Jack got so eager into his relationship that he forgot about his plans about the university and wanted to settle down with Mary. There was only one problem – he found out about Mary's other boyfriend. Even though she loved Jack, his nature was so complicated that it was easier for her to date someone else. Jack also had an affair with Peggy at the same time and did not know which of these girls to choose which made him unhappy. His sorrow affected him so much that, by the end of the summer, he lost both, Mary and Peggy too. (Nicosia, 1996, p. 50 - 53)

Despite being busy while studying at the university in New York, Jack never forgot about Mary, they kept in touch through letters and admitted that they miss each other. However, their renewed relationship did not last for long. Mary did not mind that Jack lost his virginity with a prostitute in New York and slept with a few of them – she took it as a sign that he had his time and is ready for a marriage. Jack really wanted to marry her, only his mother was strongly against as his studies were more important. (Nicosia, 1996, p. 66-67) But what caused the real problem were Jack's new friends in New York. They were too classy and snobbish for Mary, she did not understand the lifestyle of the big city. She did not hide her negative attitude towards New York, she could not imagine herself living there as Lowell was her home. She insisted on staying in her hometown, where she felt secure and comfortable. She told Jack that she would settle with him only in Lowell, never in New York. Their different ideas of the future resulted in an unbearable situation. (Nicosia, 1996, p. 66)

3.3 Frankie Edith “Edie” Parker

Another important woman in Jack Kerouac's life was Frankie Edith Parker whom he met at the college. She fell in love with him because of his talent for writing. (Nicosia, 1996, p. 95) Edie was a spontaneous and energetic woman, they were never bored together or alone as they were both very open-minded and tolerant. She did not even mind his unfaithfulness, it only provoked her to see other men too. (Nicosia, 1996, p. 102)

First shock and crisis in their relationship came when Edie told Jack that she had been pregnant when Jack was gone as a sailor. Edie's grandmother, by whom she was raised, found out and persuaded her to undergo an abortion. She did not believe that Jack would come back from his voyage to take care of Edie and the newborn and Edie felt that too. The abortion was dangerous in her fourth month of pregnancy and Jack was furious when he found out. It was supposed to be a boy and Jack wanted to keep the baby. (Nicosia, 1996, p. 115)

Edie became his first wife after tragical events in summer 1944. Lucien, Jack's and Edie's friend, killed his stalker in self-defense after an unsuccessful attempt at rape. Jack was imprisoned for cooperation with Lucien as he helped him to get rid of the killing knife. In order to bail Jack out, Edie had to use the money from her grandfather's will. The trouble was that the money could be given to her for this purpose only if she was married to Jack. He agreed, and they got married on 22th of August accompanied only by a police officer and Edie's friend. (Nicosia, 1996, p. 116-118)

After this incident, Jack and Edie were forced to move to Grosse Pointe, Edie's hometown. That was where Jack finally realized that he is not ready for the family life and he decided to leave as soon as he pays his debt towards Edie's relatives. He worked there in a factory and spent every day after work in a public library, he avoided public life, because he missed his intellectually oriented friends and no one in Grosse Pointe could replace them. This dull life started to bore Edie and eventually led to her final decision about their future. After Jack had paid his debt, he wanted to move back to New York, whereas Edie wanted to stay in her well-known hometown, and because their relationship was not moving any further, she did not try to stop him. (Nicosia, 1996, p. 118)

It seemed like their marriage is over, but Edie's car accident brought them back together. Until that, they were hardly in contact. After the accident Jack visited Edie and realized how important she was for him. When she got better, they moved to New York, to a big flat owned by Edie's friend, Joan Vollmer Adams. (Nicosia, 1996, p. 123-124) As Turner says, this place was where The Beat Generation was born. (Turner, 2006, p. 65) They all started to experiment with Bensedrine, but Edie stopped soon, unlike Jack. In the next few years, Kerouac's life was significantly influenced by Allen Ginsberg and Hal Chase and their drug sessions,

which resulted in ignorance towards Edie and eventually, tired by exhausting serving to her husband, she moved back to Grosse Point without saying a word and their marriage ended with divorce. (Nicosia, 1996, p. 126, p. 138)

3.4 Joan Haverty

Kerouac's second wife was Joan Haverty, a young widow after a man who Jack knew from the times of New York wild parties. (Turner, 2006, p. 117) They met accidentally, when Jack got lost while trying to find a party at Lucien Carr's flat, and by accident ended up calling up to Joan's window. Impulsively, he even proposed to her that night – she amazed him to that point. (Knight, 1996, p. 87) They got married spontaneously after two weeks of dating and neither of them knew why they did it. Even though Jack was not a faithful man and he avoided monotonous life at home, he did not reject the idea of marriage. The newlyweds lived together in New York for a short time, but Kerouac, writing *On the Road* at these times, decided that moving to his mother's house in Richmond Hill would be more comfortable for them. (Turner, 2006, p. 117-118)

Firstly, Joan and Gabrielle got on well as they were making company for each other when Jack went out, but soon Joan realized that Jack wanted her to learn everything, from cooking to other domestic chores, from his mother so she could eventually replace her. This resulted in tense atmosphere that Joan could not handle and after an argument the couple moved back to their own flat. (Nicosia, 1996, p. 300 - 301) Jack had his own vision about marriage. He was unfaithful and barely at home and Joan was justly jealous. However, he still required her care and his impulsiveness and dominance negatively influenced their marriage. (Nicosia, 1996, p. 310)

Joan became a mother of Kerouac's only child, a girl named Janet. It took her ten years to get an alimony from Jack, because he left her and frequently changed places of living. (Stefancic, 2013 p. 23) Carolyn Cassady, who knew Kerouac well for more than twenty years (Duval, 2014, p. 62-63) said in an interview that Jack was not ready to become a parent. Even though he wanted a family someday, he needed to get appreciated as a writer first and did not want to be bound by any commitments. He panicked because he knew that he was not able to take a proper care of a baby and therefore he abandoned Joan and Jan even before

her birth. Jack met Jan only twice in her life, even though Jan admired her father and was eager to meet him. But Cassady also says that he felt guilty for that. And even though he never took care of Jan, at least he accepted her as his daughter and let her use his name. (Duval, 2014, p. 90-91)

3.5 Stella Sampas

Stella Sampas was Kerouac's third and last wife since 1966 until his death in 1968. Stella was an unusual choice for Jack, because of her opinions and a peaceful life, for example, she was a virgin until she married him. (Turner, 2006, p. 195) According to Nicosia, Stella loved Jack since their young age, when he was a best friend with her brother Sammy. They moved to Lowell, together with Kerouac's mother, and Stella basically became a caretaker for them. Despise Stella's solicitude, Gabrielle, who suffered a stroke and needed her care, was often mean to her. She probably felt threatened, because Stella had a great power over Jack and was slowly replacing his mother. (Nicosia, 1996, p. 589)

Stella met Jack at his most complicated part of life, when he was completely addicted to alcohol and basically slowly killing himself. She tried to keep him at home, even by hiding his shoes to prevent him from wandering from one bar to another, but it was not enough to keep him from his undignified behavior. (Knight, 1996, p. 78) Stella stayed by his side until he died in on 21st October 1969. (Nicosia, 1996, p. 612) Even though living with Kerouac during his last months of his life was very challenging, Stella took her role of a wife, but mostly a caretaker, responsibly until her husband's very last day.

3.6 Chapter conclusion

Kerouac was never able to achieve a happy and long-lasting relationship. It was mostly the disagreements between him and his girlfriends or wives about the conception of marriage and their future. He did not marry Mary because he did not want to stay in Lowell as she did, Edie divorced him because he was spending much more time with his friends at parties than with her, and he left Joan because he was not ready to become a father. Jack's strong bond with his mother might have caused that he wanted Joan and Stella to be the same as her, and it even seems like he

married Stella just to take care of him and Gabrielle because they were both ill. He was never ready to fulfill the role of a husband or even a father at all, however, he required his partners to accept the roles of a wife.

4 *On the Road*

The forties in America were characterized by wealth, expansion of higher education, relative peace and geopolitical dominance in the world, but on the other hand, by moving towards materialism and consumerism. In contrast, the authors were turning away from these subjects and were finding more spiritual and personal topics. (Bercovitch and Patell, 2005, p. 178) Together with the boom of cars and the new established Eisenhower's Interstate Highway System, it was a perfect background for the emergence of the iconic American novel, *On the Road*. (Bercovitch and Patell, 2005, p. 165)

The protagonist of the story is Dean Moriarty based on a real person, author's best friend Neal Cassady. (Charters, 1991, p. 13) Dean is an active and charming young man who technically grew up on the road, because he came from poor social background. But Dean's enthusiasm to live, discover and experiment fascinated and influenced many people, forgiving him promiscuity, occasional theft or other socially unacceptable behavior.

The narrator of the story is Sal Paradise, an alter ego of Kerouac himself. (Amundsen, 2015, p. 36) He is one of those influenced by Dean. In every aspect, Sal unconditionally admires Dean and often sees him as misunderstood and unappreciated. Sal himself is not as fanatical as Dean, but he also seeks adventure to broaden his horizons and improve his writing skills.

In the final edition, the story is divided into five parts, each of them usually depicting a time period connected with one place or journey. It is not a traditionally structured novel with a simply identifiable plot. It is more like a chain of events, thoughts and descriptions limited by a certain time period. These events include experiences from travels mostly across the United States, in the last part even from a journey to Mexico, discovering the effect of drugs, enjoying the bop and jazz music and one must not forget about constant seeking for women's attention and pleasure as well as dealing with mostly unapproving girlfriends and wives.

4.1 Female characters in *On the Road*

There were women, they were there, I knew them, their families put them in institutions, they were given electric shock. In the '50s if you were male you could be a rebel, but if you were female, your families had you locked up. There were cases, I knew them, someday someone will write about them. (Knight, 1996, in Stefancic, 2013, p. 15)

This was Gregory Corso's answer to a question that was asked by a woman at a tribute to Allen Ginsberg in 1994. The question was simple: why are there so few women among the Beat writers? (Stefancic, 2013, p. 15) This short quotation perfectly describes the whole masculine background in which *On the Road* was created. Men had all the power and even the right to riot against conventions, but women were still tied up by society's expectations. Theado says, that women in American literature, not only in Kerouac's *On the Road*, represent the historical development of women's unequal position in society due to the influence and importance of "frontier-pushing males." (Theado, 2000, p. 59)

The story of *On the Road* is set between Sal's divorce with his first wife and meeting his second wife, (Theado, 2000, p. 59) so women are important as they were used to create a time frame for the story. But even though women occur in the story, they are not considered equal and independent characters as they are always mentioned in connection with male characters. (Stefancic, 2013, p. 16)

Women were mostly staying at home, waiting for their men to return from their journeys and hoping that next time it would be better and that they would have a regular relationship and a happy family that they longed for. However, Stefancic says, that women of the Beats should not be perceived just as passive characters, as they were often capable to support their marriage financially when their husbands were travelling or drinking with their male friends or when they were spending time with other women. (Stefancic, 2013, p. 29)

I saw a full-length oil painting of Galatea Dunkel over the sofa [at Camille's house]. I suddenly realized that all these women were spending months of loneliness and womanliness together, chatting about the madness of the men. (Kerouac, 1991, p. 187)

What helped them to overcome difficulties in their marriages was bonding with other women, for example Galatea Dunkel and Camille in *On the Road*. Even

though the narrator understands that they were lonely, he still sees their “womanliness” as a weakness and a reason to complain about men.

Stefancic also explains why women were so fascinated by the Beats, when they had nothing in common with the idea of an ideal husband. Many of these women were rebels themselves, longing for a little riot, but their path was much harder than for men. Women were mostly limited by their parents’ traditional opinions about marriage and family and therefore their families did not support the unconventional lifestyle that these women wanted. Above that, a rather practical reason was limiting them, because they had fewer opportunities to find a job than men. But still, they sacrificed their lives to their partners, a lot of them gave up college or raised children on their own. (Stefancic, 2013, p. 31) These women wanted more from their lives than their mothers or teachers, but they did not know how to achieve it, they had no female models, so they got attached to men whose lives went out of the ordinary. (Knight, 1996 in Stefancic, 2013, p. 29-30)

4.1.1 Marylou

Marylou is a character based on Neal Cassady’s first wife LuAnne Henderson who was only fifteen years old by the time they met. She experienced domestic violence as a teenager, her step-father beat her mother. (Sandison and Vickers, 2006, p. 50-51) Even though she did not understand her mother’s passive attitude to the violence, this pattern of behavior known from her own home may be the reason why LuAnne, or Marylou in the story, accepted that her husband was beating her.

Marylou is probably the most important woman character in the novel. Her name is mentioned right at the very beginning of the story, when Dean arrives with his “beautiful little sharp chick Marylou” (Kerouac, 1991, p. 4) and her description continues later:

Marylou was a pretty blonde with immense ringlets of hair like a sea of golden tresses; she sat there on the edge of the couch with her hands hanging in her lap and her smoky blue country eyes fixed in a wide stare because she was in an evil gray New York pad that she’d heard about back West, and waiting like a longbodied emaciated Modigliani surrealist woman in a serious room. But, outside of being a sweet little girl, she was awfully dumb and capable of doing horrible things. (Kerouac, 1991, p. 5)

The author starts with a description of her appearance which is pleasant and detailed but does not pay much attention to her personality as he only mentions her negative personal traits. He highlights her beauty and attractiveness, because most of the time she took the role of Dean's lover and therefore her appearance was important. Also, the expression "awfully dumb" puts her in a position of a woman, whose most important and treasured quality is not her character or intelligence, but appearance. The reader may question whether Dean truly loved her, even though he said he did, or whether he stayed with her only because she attracted him sexually.

This negative portrayal of Marylou is later emphasized by labeling her as a "whore"; when the narrator asked where she was, "Dean said she'd apparently whored a few dollars together and gone back to Denver – 'The whore!'" (Kerouac, 1991, p. 5-6) However, Marylou's (or LuAnne's in a real life) departure might be seen as a sign of her independence. In an interview with Duval, LuAnne's rival, Carolyn Cassady, admitted that LuAnne was very independent as she left for Denver on her own when Dean was paying all the attention to Ginsberg and Kerouac rather than to her. According to Carolyn, she was very similar to Neal in many ways. (Duval, 2014, p. 78) This similarity might be their impulsivity, passion and hot temperament.

Marylou was watching Dean as she had watched him clear across the county and back, out of the corner of her eye— with a sullen, sad air, as though she wanted to cut off his head and hide it in her closet, an envious and rueful love of him so amazingly himself, all raging and sniffy and crazy-ways, a smile of tender dotage but also sinister envy that frightened me about her. (Kerouac, 1991, p. 164)

This quotation describes her as a mad and vicious woman, but it also admits her passionate love for her man. Together with the passion also goes a fierce jealousy and sadness as she knew that Dean is going to leave her, and these attributes make her character more complicated than it may seem at a first sight. The narrator is charmed by the contrast of her intense and deep feelings, hot temperament and devotion to Dean with her womanly tenderness, so that she comes out as a strange mixture of contempt and adoration.

Another passage supporting the statement that she is described rather negatively, that she was "vindictive" and "hysterical," follows: "[Dean] had a fight

with Marylou [...] and she was so mad and so down deep vindictive that she reported to the police some false trumped-up hysterical crazy charge” (Kerouac, 1991, p. 5). However, we do not know what their fight was about and if this designation is exaggerated or not, because they might have had the fight for a serious reason and the fact that Dean occasionally beat her may question the statement that she was hysterical. But even though it may not be necessarily needed to say that she was vindictive, she was not an angel either. She was rather calculating and misusing Sal to make Dean jealous, but her attempt failed. She looked like she was interested in Sal who adored her, but as soon as Dean left them alone in San Francisco and went back to Camille, she suddenly lost her affection and resigned, because she was completely devoted to Dean. And this might prove that she was not a “whore” as Dean labeled her many times. The reason why she might be acting like that could be that she wanted Dean’s attention, and this was the way she tried to achieve it as she did not know any other way.

It is not only her portrayal, but also Dean’s attitude towards her that implies that she is not accepted as an equal member of their community. He demonstrated his dominance over her as she was supposed to take care of him and his friends: “Dean had dispatched the occupant of the apartment [Marylou] to the kitchen, probably to make coffee.” (Kerouac, 1991, p. 4) Even though she probably did not choose to, she was put into the role of Dean’s maid. Sometimes, he made up his mind wanting Marylou to act like a proper housewife, which she was not, and commanded her what to do: “[Dean] decided the thing to do was to have Marylou make breakfast and sweep the floor” (Kerouac, 1991, p. 5); “He made us all hustle, Marylou for the lunch groceries,[...]” (Kerouac, 1991, p. 115) or “Marylou, rustle around the kitchen see what there is” (Kerouac, 1991, p. 118). The problem was, that he did not fulfill the role of a proper husband either, therefore he had no right to want a similar thing from Marylou. The narrator does not comment on this commanding, so he probably agrees with Dean and accepts it as a normal requirement, which supports noticeable stereotyping of her woman’s role.

However, Marylou was nothing like a housewife at all. She was not tied up by social conventions and did not despise parties and drugs: “That night Marylou took everything in the books; she took tea, goofballs, benny, liquor, and even asked Old Bull for a shot of M, which of course he didn’t give her; he did give her a

martini.” (Kerouac, 1991, p. 148) This might be the reason why she was accepted by Dean and his friends, otherwise she would not be probably able to manage her partner’s drug usage and fast-paced life. It was an advantage that she was a lot like him. In this part of the text, we can also sense a hint of an effort to protect her as she was not given the morphine that she asked for.

Another sign of Dean’s dominance and power was the situation, when he asked Sal to have sex with Marylou: “I didn’t ask him why because I knew he wanted to see what Marylou was like with another man.” (Kerouac, 1991, p. 131) Marylou accepted, it was Sal who refused when it was about to happen and wanted to wait until they are in San Francisco, meaning that they would make a real couple without Dean there. Marylou even tried to encourage Sal, that suggests that she was willing to do everything that was on Dean’s mind. Another concerning demonstration of men’s power was that Dean used physical violence and beat Marylou for several times. According to Šedrlová, the alarming fact is that the narrator deals with this information as if it was normal and “a legitimate way to treat a woman.” (Šedrlová, 2016, p. 31) He does not pity Marylou, though he later feels for Dean, who hurt his thumb while attempting to hit her and this approach is not even stereotypical, it is rather disturbing.

After a break in Marylou’s and Dean’s relationship caused by Dean’s second marriage, they met again even though Dean already had a child with Camille and should have accepted the role of a father. Instead, he headed to New Mexico and on his way back, he “suddenly had an explosive yen to see his sweet first wife Marylou again.” (Kerouac, 1991, p. 112) This kind of relationship continued for a long time, even though Dean was still married. Their relationship lasted until Marylou got married to another man signifying that she was not a “whore” as Dean thought about her, and that with the right man she was able to settle down and have a family.

To sum up, Marylou was Dean’s wife and after their divorce still a lover who satisfied his needs. She was so attractive that Dean could not give up on her. Besides this perception of her as an object of his sexual interest, she is also stereotypically supposed to take care of Dean and even of his other male friends. Although she does not fulfil this role, even the fact that she is seen this way is disconcerting.

4.1.2 Camille

Camille is Dean's second wife based on Carolyn Cassady. (Duval, 2014, p. 253) Carolyn was an important woman among the Beat generation. Even though she might be seen as an ideal woman for that time, educated at a prestigious college and being a good mother to three children, she was a curious and creative woman who saw a potential in her friends and lovers belonging to the Beat generation. She supported them and became a muse for them. (Knight, 1996, p. 57-59)

Camille is firstly mentioned as Dean's secret lover, which puts her into a negative light that makes us see her like she is trying to break Dean's marriage. But soon, we get to know that she does not know about Marylou either and that they are both basically deceived. The description of their first meeting shows how self-confident Dean was when it came to communication with women.

Roy Johnson, the poolhall boy, had found her in a bar and took her to a hotel; pride taking over his sense, he invited the whole gang to come up and see her. Everybody sat around talking with Camille. Dean did nothing but look out the window. Then, when everybody left, Dean merely looked at Camille, pointed at his wrist, made the sign "Four" (meaning he'd be back at four), and went out. At three the door was locked to Roy Johnson. At four it was opened to Dean. (Kerouac, 1991, p. 43)

Camille was combination of intelligence, beauty and charm which was the reason for Roy Johnson to be proud of introducing her to his friends. It may also seem like Dean was somewhat offended for being ignored, because Camille was able to gain all the attention from his friends and he stayed quiet all the time, which was not his usual behavior. On the other hand, he must have been impressed by her, as he decided to seduce her. He probably attracted Camille in some way too, as she did not find his arrogant gesture offensive and basically agreed with inviting him to her bed without saying a word. Carolyn Cassady thinks, that the main cause why Neal chose her and later married her was, that he was constantly trying to improve himself and Carolyn was an educated and well-bred woman challenging him. She was different from the girls he usually dated and therefore special to him. (Duval, 2014, p. 77)

The author does not pay much attention to Camille's appearance. It can be because he did not want to portray her as an object of a sexual interest, even though he fell in love and had an affair with the woman that the character is inspired by.

He respected her family and did not want her children to read erotic stories about their mother. (Nicosia, 1996, p. 321) Her description is limited only to the following: “I saw a brunette on the bed, one beautiful creamy thigh covered with black lace, look up with mild wonder.” (Kerouac, 1991, p. 43) But even in this short part of the text may be hidden a glimpse of expressing her attractiveness. She is caught in the situation when she was lying in bed with Dean and the author paid attention to her naked leg in lace stockings.

What is more treasured than appearance is her intelligence and personality. Also, a comparison to Marylou is added and Camille comes out as the winner: “Camille was a relief after Marylou; a well-bred, polite young woman, and she was aware of the fact that the eighteen dollars Dean had sent her was mine.” (Kerouac, 1991, p. 174) A hint of almost admiration is seen in this part, the author appreciates her good manners and foresight as she knew that Sal helped Dean to send her money. Camille is also admired as an artist, when the narrator admits that he was impressed by her paintings: “On the wall was a nude drawing of Dean, enormous dangle and all, done by Camille. I was amazed.” (Kerouac, 1991, p. 44) Camille’s another positive attribute is her independence, for example it was her who “had just gotten an apartment” (Kerouac, 1991, p. 107) instead of relying on a man.

Camille and Dean had a daughter Amy, Dean had a proper job and supported his family financially and their marriage was happy. Problems started when Dean got an urge to travel again. Since this time, Camille is depicted as hysterical and over-reacting. ““She’s getting worse and worse, man, she cries and makes tantrums, won’t let me out to see Slim Gaillard, gets mad every time I’m late, then when I stay home she won’t talk to me and says I’m an utter beast.””(Kerouac, 1991, p. 183) However, considering the circumstances, her reaction is understandable. She knew what Dean was capable of and she was worried that he might not come back to her. Camille would be left home alone with her baby-daughter and a second baby on the way, because she got pregnant. She was responsible and needed a supportive husband in this situation, so it was reasonable that she did not want her husband to leave. Also, she would not be able to keep her job.

This situation with Camille being “hysterical” brings a conflict in the perception of her between Dean and narrating Sal, who did not see her that negatively and admits, that her behavior may be Dean’s fault: “I had no idea what

was really wrong, except perhaps Dean had driven her mad after all.” (Kerouac, 1991, p. 183) Sal tried to be nice to her, but she was still too sad and too worried about Dean. Their fights came so far that instead of waiting for Dean to hurt her feelings again, she threw him and Sal out of their house. It surely took a lot of courage to do so, raising a child alone was not easy in the 1940’s but Camille was strong enough to do so. As Carolyn Cassady says in an interview with Duval, she was also friends with LuAnne, Neal’s lover, and they even discussed their love problems. She did not hate her as it would be expected, instead, she took it as Neal’s choice, meaning that she was able to give him an incredible amount of freedom. It was not easy for her, but she went through a progress of her personality and grew into a strong woman. (Duval, 2014, p. 79)

After that incident, Dean met a new girl, Inez, and impulsively decided to divorce Camille and marry Inez. That was the reason for his travel to Mexico, because divorce was easier there. However, Inez struggled in the same way as Camille did: “Inez called up Camille on the phone repeatedly and had long talks with her; [...] They exchanged letters about Dean’s eccentricities.” (Kerouac, 1991, p. 250) The fact that she tried to help and encourage her ex-husband’s new wife only proves how strong and tolerant she was. In the end, Dean comes back to Camille, but it looks like that Dean is not aware of her suffering as much as Sal: “So Dean’s life was settled with his most constant, most embittered, and best-knowing wife Camille, and I thanked God for him.” (Kerouac, 1991, p. 308) Sal knew that Camille is the right woman for Dean and that he will not be able to find a more understanding woman.

4.1.3 Terry

Terry is a character occurring only in a short and time-limited part of the story. Sal Paradise meets Terry at the bus station and is immediately fascinated by her appearance. The author describes her as “the cutest little Mexican girl in slacks” (Kerouac, 1991, p. 81) and continues with the description: “her breasts stuck out straight and true; her little flanks looked delicious; her hair was long and lustrous black; and her eyes were great big blue things with timidities inside.” (Kerouac, 1991, p. 81) Through every description of her he emphasizes her “cuteness” and

tiny figure. Even though it was her appearance that made him talk to her, their loneliness and life stories brought them together.

Their relationship seems fragile as they both had their own issues and simply needed someone who would understand them and make their lives less harsh. It was Sal's first big journey and from the beginning it did not go as he planned, and he felt "so lonely, so sad, so tired, so quivering, so broken, so beat" (Kerouac, 1991, p. 81). Terry was a single mother who left her son at her parents' and was running away from her abusive husband to seek shelter at her sister's in LA. Their insecurity and previous experiences firstly led to suspicious behavior, as Sal thought that Terry is a prostitute looking for clients on the bus, whereas Terry suspected him of being a pimp. However, they overcame this crisis and after picking up Terry's son and finding a job they created a pseudo-family lasting fifteen days. Despite their hard-work at the cotton field and living in a tent, their relationships were harmonic and uplifting and they both accepted their roles – Sal was working and providing her money and Terry was the one taking care of him and her son, cooking after a long day or sewing Sal's poor clothes.

It almost seems that their relationship worked because Sal was not under the influence of his male friends, mainly Dean: "I forgot all about the East and all Dean and Carlo and the road." (Kerouac, 1991, p. 97) According to Jones, it was Sal's first successful attempt to have a proper family to take care of responsibly. But Sal felt that his old life and friends are calling him back and decided to leave. (Jones, 1999, p. 95) And even though Sal promised Terry to meet her again in New York when they would be in a better situation, he did not actually believe it. "She was supposed to drive to New York in a month with her brother. But we both knew she wouldn't make it." (Kerouac, 1991, p. 101) It was probably his least complicated and most romantic relationship, but still he was not able to take it seriously enough to make it work. Right after he got on a bus, he met a girl with whom he "necked all the way to Indianapolis" (Kerouac, 1991, p. 103) so he immediately forgets about Terry, whom he claimed he loved.

4.1.4 Galatea Dunkel

"Ed had met a girl called Galatea who was living in San Francisco on her savings." (Kerouac, 1991, p. 111) This is the very first time that Galatea is mentioned in the

text and from the very beginning she is not portrayed as other women in the novel. Even though she is still mentioned only with connection with the protagonist's male friend, she is described as an independent woman able to live alone without the support of a man. Ed, together with Dean, wanted to bring Galatea on the journey from San Francisco to the East Coast in order to support them financially, meaning that she was not only able to live on her own, but she was also able to earn and save enough money which she could provide to them. It suggests that she was more capable than them and the fact that Ed had to please her to come with them means that she was considered important. She agreed, but she insisted on marriage with Ed. This is another sign that they really needed her and were willing to accept her as their companion, even though for despicable reasons.

The author does not pay attention to her appearance as she is not seen as an object of a sexual interest, however, her purpose was to finance the trip and once she ran out of money, she becomes useless and uncomfortable for further travelling.

All along the way Galatea Dunkel, Ed's new wife, kept complaining that she was tired and wanted to sleep in a motel. [...] By the time they got to Tuscon she was broke. Dean and Ed gave her the slip in a hotel lobby and resumed the voyage alone, with the sailor, and without a qualm. (Kerouac, 1991, p. 112)

The fact that they left her without feeling guilty supports the idea that she was only misused and therefore not an equal partner in their travels. It is also another proof that Dean leaves every time when inconvenience occurs, and a woman is no more useful for him. Another example of Galatea being useful for practical purposes was when she was the first one of whom Sal and Dean thought when they arrived to Mill City – a city where she lived – to ask her about a place to stay. “[...] we decided to go see Galatea Dunkel about sleeping accommodations.” (Kerouac, 1991, p. 192) Their visit was purely practical, they did not even think that they could visit her for other reasons such as friendship.

Despite her previous unpleasant experience with being abandoned, Galatea did not give up and persisted in looking for her husband. She arrived at Bull Lee's in New Orleans where Dean and Ed were heading and stayed there, even though she did not know anything about her involuntary host. She took the new role of a wife seriously and responsibly. She phoned from Bull Lee's apartment to Sal's

where Ed and Dean stayed. But she was not angry at them as one may expect: “She wanted to know how Ed was. She was all concerned about his happiness.” (Kerouac, 1991, p. 118) Galatea was caring and patient instead of causing a scene, yet she earned an unpleasant name: “Galatea Dunkel was a tenacious loser.” (Kerouac, 1991, p. 118) She was persistent indeed as she kept waiting at Old Bull Lee’s, slowly getting the reputation of a burden, because she was out of money again. But the attempt to get her husband back was successful and eventually, Ed, together with Dean and Sal, arrived. However, their reunion was rather embarrassing. She blamed mostly Dean for having a bad influence on Ed, but Dean did not care at all: “Dean paid absolutely no attention; what he wanted now was food”. (Kerouac, 1991, p. 142) Again, in connection with women he was interested only in satisfaction of his basic physical needs.

In this part of the text, the author provides an information about Galatea’s appearance – even though very brief – for the first time. It is relatively late, as it is usual for him to start describing a woman’s look: “Galatea was a serious girl. She was pale and looked like tears all over.” (Kerouac, 1991, p. 142) After all this testing of her patience, Galatea stayed with Ed. Despite the fact that she is mostly described negatively, and the reader may question why Ed stayed with her and the group tolerated her, she had some light moments when the narrator pictures situations when they were having fun: “Galatea and Marie with beer in their hands were standing on their chairs, shaking and jumping.” (Kerouac, 1991, p. 197) She must have had some qualities that her husband loved.

Galatea’s and Ed’s marriage was never easy. If it was not Dean who took her husband away, it was someone else and Galatea was left in her loneliness again. “Ed had left her again, was in Denver, and damned if she still didn’t plot to get him back.” (Kerouac, 1991, p. 192) The narrator seems to lighten the situation by implying that she always has a plan how to get her husband back: “‘He’ll come back,’ said Galatea. ‘That guy can’t take care of himself without me.’” (Kerouac, 1991, p. 192) Now it seems that Galatea has been through a progress and instead of chasing Ed around the States, she rather resigned and confidently waited for him at home, staying calm in certainty that he will return. She is so honestly devoted to him that she would forgive him anything.

It seems that the freedom she gave to her husband impressed the narrator and he started to see her in a more positive way. The description of her seems almost noble as she gained respect in his eyes:

Galatea looked like the daughter of the Greeks with the sunny camera as she sat there on the rug, her long hair streaming to the floor, plying the fortunetelling cards. I got to like her. We even decided to go out that night and hear jazz [...] (Kerouac, 1991, p. 192)

Later on, she gained even more respect when she was not afraid to confront Dean and say what most of his friends thought. She is the one who understands other wives and girlfriends and eventually she is the only one who tries to fight for them, who tries to put Dean and Sal on the right path. But her approach is not appreciated by the narrator, who is convinced that Dean is doing his best. “‘Dean, why do you act so foolish’ said Galatea. ‘Camille called and said you left her. Don’t you realize you have a daughter?’” (Kerouac, 1991, p. 193) She slightly changed the narrator’s point of view for a very short time as she pointed out at Dean’s unacceptable behavior: “‘For years now you haven’t had any sense of responsibility for anyone. You’ve done so many awful things I don’t know what to say to you.’ And in fact that was the point.” (Kerouac, 1991, p. 193) For this very brief moment the narrator admits, that Galatea was right, but quickly comes back to his original opinion that Dean is just misunderstood.

4.1.5 Lee Ann

Lee Ann is a Remi Boncouer’s girlfriend, who lives with him in San Francisco. The first information we get about her supports the idea that women are useful only for some reasons, in this case for taking care of a household. It is said that she was “a marvelous cook” (Kerouac, 1991, p. 11) and then that she “had a bad tongue and gave him [Remi] a calldown every day.” (Kerouac, 1991, p. 61) Another negative description right while introducing her, suggesting that she is the bad one in the relationship and that she is mad at her man for no obvious reasons. The narrator does not mention why they were arguing all the time, he only highlights Lee Ann’s negative attitude.

Her appearance is described like this: “She was a fetching hunk, a honey-colored creature but there was hate in her eyes for both of us.” (Kerouac, 1991,

p. 63) The word creature, together with her previous portrayal as a woman who is indulging in yelling at her partner and hating his friends, plus the label “untamed shrew” (Kerouac, 1991, p. 75) that she was given later, make her look almost dehumanized. The narrator admits her beauty, but in this case, it sounded rather mocking than real appreciation of her look. Šedrlová points out that the word “hunk” is usually used to describe an attractive man, so in this context it might mean that the narrator was mocking her. (Šedrlová, 2016, p. 42)

Her hatred is emphasized throughout the text. She blames Remi for her miserable life. She wanted to marry a rich man, but instead, she met Remi at one of his spendthrift moods and thought that he was the right one. Lee Ann’s expectations are in accordance with conventional ideas about relationships in the 1940’s as she wanted a husband who would financially secure her. This may be the reason why they were saving money all week in order to spend it during three hours on Saturdays:

[...] they yelled at each other all week. I never saw so many snarls in all my born days. But on Saturday night, smiling graciously at each other, they took off like a pair of successful Hollywood characters and went on the town. (Kerouac, 1991, p. 61)

It gave Lee Ann the opportunity to live a life that she had wanted but did not achieve. For a short moment, she took a glimpse of a luxury life that was not meant for her and enjoyed it to the last moment, being nice to her man and pretending that they are living in a happy relationship.

Another example where Lee Ann is portrayed as a woman who cares about money and prefers successful men is the situation when she was about to meet Remi’s stepfather who was a wealthy doctor: “Lee Ann was impressed, [...] she thought he might be a catch, if his son wasn’t.” (Kerouac, 1991, p. 76) One may argue if it was really her thought or if it was just the narrator’s speculation; in any case, this depiction of her is rather stereotypical and generalizing, because the narrator did not try to understand her behavior, he only criticized her.

4.1.6 Jane Lee

Jane is also based on a real person, Joan Vollmer Burroughs. (Duval, 2014, p. 252) She was an intelligent and promising young woman from economically well-

situated family. At the college she shared an apartment with Edie Parker, Kerouac's first wife, where she met the Beat writers, including Kerouac, Ginsberg and her future husband William S. Burroughs. Despite her family's ambitions, she fell for drugs, experienced hospitalization due to her Bensedrine addiction and ended up tragically as she was accidentally shot by her own drugged husband. (Stefancic, 2013, p. 24) Their relationship with Burroughs, a model for Old Bull Lee, was rather strange. He was a homosexual and his life together with sensitive Joan brought confusing emotions. (Tytell, 1996, p. 46) This fact caused that Joan was not an object of sexual interest, but rather his best friend. Stefancic says, that they had a "relationship based more on intellect than sex" (Stefancic, 2013, p. 24).

What is described with the narrator's interest is Jane's relationship with her husband called Old Bull Lee. The narrator admired their bond and admitted that he or Dean are not competent to achieve a profound relationship like Jane's:

She loved that man madly, but in a delirious way of some kind; there was never any mooching and mincing around, just talk and a very deep companionship that none of us would ever be able to fathom. (Kerouac, 1991, p. 146)

The expression companionship is very important, because it indicates that it is not sexuality or other purpose that connects them. In other words, this true partnership may be caused by the fact that her partner was actually a homosexual as mentioned above and so he stayed with her because they really understood each other and not for side intentions. However, their marriage implies that they did not resist the pressure of the society and tried to create a conventional family.

Jane is described as a woman, who is dependent on her husband, as she "was never more than ten feet away from Bull and never missed a word he said" (Kerouac, 1991, p. 146) Together with the statement "she loved that man madly" (Kerouac, 1991, p. 146) it creates a picture of a reliant woman less important than Old Bull Lee, about whose love the author did not say a word.

The narrator does not comment on Jane's Bensedrine addiction, he accepts it as a part of her personality. He does not judge her even when he mentions that she has a child that she has to take care of but instead she ends up in a hospital: "Jane wandering on Times Square in a benzedrine hallucination, with her baby girl

in her arms and ending up in Bellevue.” (Kerouac, 1991, p. 8) Her addiction is not perceived negatively, probably because a lot of male characters in the novel were addicted themselves and still seen as equal, sometimes drugs were seen as something that enriched their lives, escalated creativity or enhanced their perception. Therefore, a woman addicted to Benzedrine was not something unusual as the reader might think. The author does not subjectively comment on her behavior, he just simply states that “[...] in those days she ate three tubes of benzedrine paper a day.” (Kerouac, 1991, p. 142) Even while speaking about her children, the author does not show any emotions, just pointing out, that almost all of their money went to drugs and “Their food bill was the lowest in the country; they hardly ever ate; nor did the children – they didn’t seem to care”. (Kerouac, 1991, p. 143) Even though Jane was failing in motherhood, she was still expected to take on the role of a caregiver from her guests, Sal and Dean.

The description of her appearance is there mostly to indicate that she went through tough times: “Her face, once plump and Germanic and pretty, had become stony and red and gaunt. She had caught polio in New Orleans and limped a little.” (Kerouac, 1991, p. 142) The fact that she is far from beautiful does not seem to be important for the narrator, she is recognized as a housewife, even though not very usual and successful one. She is often depicted in situations connected stereotypically with women, such as taking care of children, cooking or cleaning, for example: “She plied the broom around the kitchen.” (Kerouac, 1991, p. 154).

4.2 Chapter conclusion

The protagonists’ different points of view of femininity, Sal’s as a “nurturing wife” and Dean’s as a “sexual object” create the tension throughout the book. (Theado, 2000, p. 59) It is said that even though Sal has struggles with finding an appropriate woman for himself, he still understands that he needs a woman who would make his life complete. However, this need of a woman and “peaceful life” is in contrast with his urge to travel and discover and he seems caught in between these two counterparts. (Theado, 2000, p. 59) On the other hand, Dean sees women as “sexual objects” (Theado, 2000, p. 59) and therefore treats them like that: he falls in and out of love very quickly, he does not know what faithfulness is and he is not bothered to find out, women are useful only if they can satisfy him in one way or another.

“For to him [Dean] sex was the one and only holy and important thing in life.” (Kerouac, 1991, p. 4) Whenever it comes to dealing with some serious problem, he leaves and leaves his girlfriends or his wife in their loneliness.

There are characters who are seen mostly as wives, for example Camille, whose sexuality is put aside. Despite her qualities like intelligence or artistic talent, she is seen primarily as Dean’s wife, sometimes hysterical, but overall the most understanding one. On the other hand, there are characters whose primary roles are being lovers. For example, Marylou is portrayed as an attractive young woman whose main role is to satisfy Dean sexually. However, she is also expected to take care of him and his friends even though she fails in fulfilling this role. There are also other female characters in the novel than these mentioned in this chapter, but they occur only for a very short period of time. They are mostly girls who attracted male characters and those who had only one-night affairs with them. These women are not getting further narrator’s attention, because they are only objects of sexual pleasure.

Conclusion

Considering the chapter 'Women's roles in the 1940's', we can claim that the perception of female characters in the novel *On the Road* is in agreement with the period perception of women as attractive cheerful wives devoted to their husbands. When these expectations are not fulfilled, and a woman does not agree with her partner's opinions and his way of life, she is judged for it.

The author's vision of marriage was deformed and non-equal for women. He demanded freedom, but also selfishly a home care from his wives. Apart from the society's general perception of women, his attitude may be also caused by the pattern he knew from his own home. His mother Gabrielle, who had been highly affected by the death of her oldest child and had become overprotective, fulfilled all the wishes that Jack had without speaking and represented a model of a perfect housewife.

Women in *On the Road* are mostly mentioned in relation with male characters and in the following two situations – either in connection with taking care of men and doing chores like cooking or cleaning, which corresponds with the author's perception of women, or in connection with physical and sexual attractiveness corresponding with the point of view of the protagonist, based on a real person and author's best friend, Neal Cassady. The author usually starts with the description of physical appearance of women and does not pay much attention to their personality, as he does with male characters. It might imply that women's appearance is more important as they are often seen as objects of sexual interest.

The aim of this bachelor's project was to analyze the portrayal of female characters and their roles in Jack Kerouac's novel *On the Road* and the results agree with the statement that women's roles described in the novel are stereotypical. Even though the author accomplished a significant success in pushing certain boundaries and despite his progressive methods of writing and choice of provocative topics, he stayed very conventional in the perception of women.

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Résumé

Cílem této práce je analyzovat vyobrazení ženských postav a jejich rolí v Kerouacově románu *Na cestě* (1957). Historický kontext je zaměřen na pozici žen v tehdejší společnosti a spolu s biografickými informacemi o autorovi tvoří teoretický rámec pro lepší pochopení jeho literárního díla. Samotná analýza zkoumá jednotlivé ženské postavy, jejich role a vztah k mužským postavám. Na základě této analýzy je vyvozen závěr, že autor popisuje ženy v souladu s obecným dobovým vnímáním žen a jejich rolí ve 40. letech 20. století.

Annotation

Jméno a příjmení:	Terezie Lišková
Katedra nebo ústav:	Ústav cizích jazyků
Vedoucí práce:	Mgr. Petr Anténe, M.A., Ph.D.
Rok obhajoby:	2019

Název práce:	Ženské postavy v Kerouacově <i>Na cestě</i>
Název v angličtině:	Female characters in Kerouac's <i>On the Road</i>
Anotace práce:	Cílem této práce je analyzovat vyobrazení ženských postav a jejich rolí v Kerouacově románu <i>Na cestě</i> (1957). Analýza zkoumá jednotlivé ženské postavy, jejich role a vztah k mužským postavám.
Klíčová slova:	Jack Kerouac, <i>Na cestě</i> , beatníci, žena, společenské role, poválečné období
Anotace v angličtině:	The aim of this project is to analyze the portrayal of female characters and their roles in Jack Kerouac's novel <i>On the Road</i> (1957). The analysis examines individual female characters, their roles and relationships with male characters.
Klíčová slova v angličtině:	Jack Kerouac, <i>On the Road</i> , Beat generation, woman, social roles, postwar era
Přílohy vázané v práci:	CD
Rozsah práce:	40 s.
Jazyk práce:	Anglický jazyk