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## Naked Dinner: A Comparison of Dionysian and Apollonian Values Between the Beat Generation and Generation Z

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Naked Dinner: A Comparison of Dionysian and Apollonian Values Between the Beat Generation  
and Generation Z

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## Introduction

Ginsberg's haunting voice reverberates through the page as he recounts watching "the best minds of [his] generation destroyed by madness"<sup>1</sup> in his revolutionary first line of *Howl*, which relayed the horrors of the Beat Generation characterized by the scandalous and iconically "prurient" artists of 1950s America<sup>2</sup>. Ginsberg's words echo a sentiment that Generation Z (those of the passionate Generation preceding 1997) are all too familiar with<sup>3</sup>. Brought up in a post-9/11 world, the weight of a violated nation and an economic crisis became the first birthday presents of many 'Gen Z' children. However, their unfortunate circumstances are comparable to Ginsberg's generation's adoption of being 'Beat' as both generations utilized their young voices to question social adherence to the norm. Both generations uphold the 'Dionysian and Apollonian' relationship as employed by William Everson who discusses the necessity of nonconforming and exuberant Dionysian personalities in the face of an overwhelmingly Apollonian and rational society. Everson argues that the vitality of empires rests on the ability to challenge its institutions - or embracing the Dionysian spirit in balance with Apollonian views - collating the unsuccessful Roman Empire with the similar trajectory of the United States<sup>4</sup>. Although his analysis focuses on 1950s America, the relationship still remains relevant for Generation Z among the social conservatism associated with the Trump Administration<sup>5</sup>. Overwhelmingly, both generations face this Grecian grapple and navigate their respective American social environments with similar approaches mirrored in free love and sexuality,

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<sup>1</sup> Ginsberg, Allen. "Howl." 1947-1980. Poetry Foundation, <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/49303/howl>.

<sup>2</sup> Cook, Bruce. *The Beat Generation*. Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1983.

<sup>3</sup> Seemiller, Corey., and Grace, Meghan. *Generation Z: a Century in the Making*. London: Routledge, 2019.

<sup>4</sup> Rizzo, Fred Frank. A Study of The Poetry of William Everson. The University of Oklahoma, PhD dissertation, 1966. ProQuest, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.uky.edu/docview/302195961?pq-origsite=primo>.

<sup>5</sup> Barber, Michael, and Jeremy C. Pope. "Conservatism in the Era of Trump." *Perspectives on Politics*, September 1, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S153759271900077X>.

opposition to capitalism and exploration of communism, socialization of drugs, and racial disparity.

The context of the Beats arises in a time of great political chaos. Post-WWII, threats of communism rattled bombs at the democratic foundations of the US, launching Americans into distress with the rise of McCarthyism. While the constructs of the Red Scare had many political implications, the surge of communism prompted a questioning of sexuality that followed the Lavender Scare<sup>6</sup>. These conditions coupled with the rise of mainstream counterculture, jingoism, and drug use filling the petri dish of individuality upon which the Beats were cultured.

Generation Z has employed its generational legacy in an era of increased social awareness. The introduction of technology has promoted activism between the young generation which has brought about a second civil rights movement, prompted legislation targeting the LGBTQ+ community, and strengthened feminist campaigns<sup>7</sup>. The differences in the cultural contexts of both generations thus do not follow a linear form of development but rather one that is parallel with social movements running along with each other amongst the perpendicular attacks of varying historical events.

Previous studies about the Beat generation lack the Apollonian and Dionysian dynamics in conjunction with a comparative analysis between these similar generations. However, highlighting the resemblance of both generations can ultimately provide insight into the problems plaguing current society. In shedding light on these issues, we can collectively work to remedy them. I assert that there are many parallels between the two considering the social concerns affecting both eras and thus, it is important to distinguish the Dionysian and Apollonian

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<sup>6</sup> Gallagher, Sara. "*Learning to Be Mad, in a Dream*": *The Cold War and the Birth of the Beat Generation*. Trent University, Master's dissertation, September 2014. *ProQuest*, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.uky.edu/docview/1622378756?pq-origsite=primo>.

<sup>7</sup> Ray Brescia. *The Future of Change*. New York: Cornell University Press, 2020.

expression of values in the Beat Generation and Generation Z. All in all, while the efforts of Generation Z coupled with technology have been more successful in establishing social revolutions, the Beat Generation better embodies the Dionysian spirit in their empirical thoughts and actions.

### *Queer Eyes*

The technology of the 21st century has ushered in a heightened sense of acceptance and visibility accompanying the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, questioning, and other sexual identities (LGBTQ+) community. The adoption of the internet has allowed more exposure to sexuality branding Generation Z as socially progressive<sup>8</sup>. In a mythic sense, Dionysian values are particularly evident in the sexual exploration of homosexuality - apparent in both generations albeit unequally. Finally, as evident in the prolonging of literature describing homosexual relationships in the Beat generation, the Dionysian value of sexual exploration is being more deliberately endorsed by Generation Z.

The Dionysian value of sexual exploration was investigated in both generations disproportionately. Among the Beat generation, sentimentals of homophobia were still incredibly strong. The stigma surrounding sexuality in 1950s America prompted William Burroughs to write *Queer*<sup>9</sup>, “as a response to homophobic American culture’s deployment of ‘spectrality’”<sup>10</sup>. His proposed iconoclasm, however, was heavily delayed as his book was mutilated by

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<sup>8</sup> Mehra, B. and Braquet, D. "Progressive LGBTQ reference: coming out in the 21st century." *Reference Services Review*, 16 August 2011. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.uky.edu/10.1108/00907321111161403>

<sup>9</sup> Burroughs, William. *Queer*. New York: Viking Press, 1985.

<sup>10</sup> Trask, Michael. “Review of *Queer Experimental Literature: The Affective Politics of Bad Reading*, by Bradway, Tyler.” *College Literature*, 2018. <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.uky.edu/docview/2161089966?pq-origsite=primo&accountid=11836>.

conformity-culture with *Queer* being published in 1984 - 30 years after his death<sup>11</sup>. The delay in publishing may have meant that Burroughs avoided public controversy but the late author was not immune to the exaggeration and stereotyping that followed *Queer* with its roots in pedophilia and toxic masculinity<sup>12</sup>. As a result, the Beat generation, while attempting to dismantle destructive systems preventing sexual liberty ultimately died at the hands of the societal norm of the time. Contrarily, LGBTQ+ representation in media with Generation Z has encouraged a heightened allowance of sexual exploration than what was given to Burroughs. Generation Z has paved the way for media depictions of homosexuality in TV shows and movies such as *Queer Eye* and *Call Me by Your Name*. *Queer Eye*, acclaimed for, “celebrating queer identity”<sup>13</sup> premiered on Netflix in 2018 and gave viewers a normalized view of LGBTQ+ - not as assimilation but as acceptance. The 2017 movie *Call Me by Your Name* based on the 2007 novel of the same name by André Aciman<sup>14</sup> drew some parallels to Burrough’s *Queer* through themes of pedophilia but was ultimately praised for its scenic and narrative beauty. Its intense and realistic depiction of gay lovers further catapulted the film career of Timothée Chalamet whose acting prowess has reverberated throughout Generation Z. The extent of the movie to deliver its messages to audiences invested in diverse stories has allowed Generation Z to embrace the depictions of the LGBTQ+ community far more than in Burroughs’ time. The forthcoming inclusion of queer material suggests that sexual exploration led to more discoveries within Generation Z than in the Beat Generation.

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<sup>11</sup> Sid Sondergard (2003) Unable to Queer the Deal: William S. Burroughs's Negotiations with “Eugene Allerton”, Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction, 44:2, 144-156, DOI: 10.1080/00111610309599942

<sup>12</sup> Burroughs, William. *Queer*. New York: Viking Press, 1985.

<sup>13</sup> Legh Nordstrom. “Eye: Cooking Through Memories.” *Women’s Wear Daily*, May 9, 2019. <https://wwd.com/eye/people/antoni-porowski-in-the-kitchen-book-1203252435/>.

<sup>14</sup> Albertsen, Lise. *Portrayal of Sexuality in André Aciman's Novel Call Me by Your Name (2007) and Luca Guadagnino's Film Adaption Call Me by Your Name (2017)*. Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Bachelor’s thesis, 2020. *ProQuest*, <https://hdl.handle.net/11250/2670845>.

That is not to devalue the importance of representation in the Beat generation, however. Their less successful attempts of inclusion were more of a product of 1950s American society's unwillingness to accept the secretive stray from heteronormativity. This is evident from the way both Burroughs and Aciman discuss pedophilia but Burroughs' depiction was used as a weapon against homosexuality while Aciman was criticized for his storyline.

This Dionysian value of proposed promiscuity due to sexual unconformity is thus more evident in Generation Z which has uplifted LGBTQ+ preferences throughout social, visual, and literary media. It is important to note that the stigma surrounding sexuality in the Beat Generation was heavily tied to political factors. When comparing the political contexts of the Beat Generation and Generation Z, the Red Scare of the 1950s massively contributed to a fear of femininity and associated weakness that accompanied sexual dysphoria. The Red Scare gave rise to the 'Lavender Scare' during the Cold War where homosexuality was deemed a national threat for its supposed ties to communism<sup>15</sup>. This rampant and idle paranoia plagued the LGBTQ+ community of the Beat Generation in a way that has not penetrated the negligible communistic fear of Generation Z. Therefore, this Grecian ideology follows a more classic American fear when placed in the circumstance of sexuality among the Beat Generation which provides reasoning for the way Generation Z has a better grasp of the Dionysian value.

Overwhelmingly, the use of technology has garnered more acceptance of the LGBTQ+ community and thus, upheld the Dionysian value of sexual exploration and unconformity more successfully than the Beat Generation.

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<sup>15</sup> Shibusawa, Naoko. "The Lavender Scare and Empire: Rethinking Cold War Antigay Politics." *Diplomatic History*, November 2012. [https://www.jstor.org/stable/44376170?seq=1#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/44376170?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents).



## Kinsey's "WAP": Women and Pleasure

The constitutional value of freedom of speech was gratingly tested during the Beat generation with the dissemination of sexually charged literature in the form of explicit stories and promiscuous research. Generation Z, once again strengthened by technology, has also embraced the sexual uncensored nature of the Dionysian spirit. The balance between Dionysian and Apollonian constructs is ardently tested in the hypersexualization of women and Black people, education in schools, and the question of pornography as art in both generations. With the demand for sexually graphic material spanning decades of history, it comes as no surprise that both generations have suffered similar reactions of backlash. However, there is a level of disparity accompanying how sexual material is portrayed in Generation Z versus among the Beat generation.

In the Beat Generation, sexual material was faced with much retaliation. Just as Burroughs waited 30 years to publish *Queer*<sup>16</sup> to avoid public harassment, female Beat writer Diane DiPrima took detours in the publishing of her *Memoirs of a Beatnik* by going through a French publishing company for her erotic novel<sup>17</sup>. The inherent rejection of DiPrima's work in the US provided evidence of the conservative culture accompanying the 1950s. DiPrima's revolutionary erotica thoroughly embodied the sexual and licentious aspects of the Dionysian spirit especially in the face of strong counter-active Apollonian forces in her home country. To add to the feminsit 'love' movement, Lenore Kandel offered her contribution to the Beat movement by creating *The Love Book* which explored spirituality and obscenity to the point of

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<sup>16</sup> Sid Sondergard. "Unable to Queer the Deal: William S. Burroughs's Negotiations with "Eugene Allerton", *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, January 1, 2003.

<https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.uky.edu/docview/212443407?pq-origsite=primo&accountid=11836>.

<sup>17</sup> DiPrima, Diane. *Memoir of a Beatnik*. Paris: Olympia Press, 1969.

being recalled by police for its explicit material<sup>18</sup>. Furthermore, the release of Kinsey Report further contributed a Dionysian spirit in the face of an Apollonian worldview. The infamous Kinsey Reports included the books *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* and *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* and included statistical ‘sex research’ surrounding sexuality, premarital sex, and female pleasure - all true and all appalling to 1950s America<sup>19</sup>. The Kinsey Report was possibly more Dionysian than DiPrima’s publication in that it contributed to epiphanies among the population who began to realize that women could actually experience pleasure. Kinsey faced a slew of Apollonian retaliation and was even labeled “demonic”<sup>20</sup> with his research constantly being discredited and associated with the threat of communism. Similarly to DiPrima and Kinsey’s Apollonian pushback, Ginsberg faced an obscenity trial with the publication of *Howl and Other Poems*. Its provocative material in reference to discussions about homosexuality led to an ‘obscenity trial’ in 1957 against Ginsberg’s publishing company, San Francisco’s City Lights<sup>21</sup>. The implication of the subtle sexual material (which was not remotely as profound as DiPrima or Kinsey) was not only a case of conservative Apollonian and sexual Dionysian tensions but a branch of the Red Scare- as if there is anything more ironically American than restricting the first amendment for fear of communism. This constant power struggle between Dionysian sexual liberty and Apollonian conservatism defined the extent to which sexual activity could be discussed throughout the Beat Generation. And although the Beat Generation attempted

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<sup>18</sup> Orsini, Maximillian J. *The Buddhist Beat Poetics of Diane Di Prima and Lenore Kandel*. Drew University, PhD dissertation, May 2016. *ProQuest*,

<https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.uky.edu/docview/1783596997?pq-origsite=primo>

<sup>19</sup> Bullough, Vern L. “Alfred Kinsey and the Kinsey Report: Historical Overview and Lasting Contributions.” *The Journal of Sex Research*, May 1, 1998.

[https://www-jstor-org.ezproxy.uky.edu/stable/3813664?seq=1#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www-jstor-org.ezproxy.uky.edu/stable/3813664?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents).

<sup>20</sup> Pittenger, W. Norman, and Alfred C. Kinsey. *The Christian View of Sexual Behavior; a Reaction to the Kinsey Report*. New York: Seabury Press, 1954.

<sup>21</sup> Black, Joel Elan. ‘Arrested for Selling Poetry!’ or ‘You Wouldn’t Want Your Children Reading This’: *The Historical Significance of the “Howl” Obscenity Trial*. Concordia University, Master’s dissertation, 2003. *ProQuest*, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.uky.edu/docview/305295243?pq-origsite=primo>.

to open up the conversation to the bedroom, the door was promptly shut by a population that was too ashamed to embrace reality.

In this way, Generation Z has surpassed the ability of the Beat Generation in the Dionysian value of sexually explicit material beginning with popular music well into pornographic literature and movies. The 2020 release of “WAP” by artist Cardi B raised many Apollonian retaliation as the sexually unrestrained song became the Tik Tok anthem of Generation Z<sup>22</sup>. Vulgarity in the media has been criticized for decades (see above) but many conservative listeners took “WAP” as an excuse to demean the feminist movement. As notorious conservative Ben Shapiro sarcastically stated, “this is what feminism fought for”<sup>23</sup>. Regardless, radio stations streamed the ‘clean’ version despite public reprisal. Furthermore, the rise of sexual movies such as the *After* and *50 Shades of Gray* series have accompanied Generation Z into their sexual maturity. And furthermore, media outlets such as Snapchat have allowed for sexual transparency - whether welcome or not<sup>24</sup>. The openness of media to Dionysian sexuality *despite* Apollonian critique sets Generation Z apart from the Beat Generation. Whereas Apollonian views often demonized and implicated writers in the Beat Generation, Generation Z has welcomed more open discussion of sexual topics -for better or for worse. But while both generations have overcome challenges within the sex department, education has been one stationary hurdle in the complete embrace of sexual conversation.

The instruction of abstinence in schools from the 1950s well into Generation Z, however, serves as a continuous reminder of conservative Apollonian ideals. Abstinence - deeply rooted in

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<sup>22</sup> Stefan Townes. “Why We Should Defend Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion's ‘WAP.’” *University Wire*, October 8, 2020. <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.uky.edu/docview/2439551996?pq-origsite=primo&accountid=11836>.

<sup>23</sup> Stefan Townes. “Why We Should Defend Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion's ‘WAP.’” *University Wire*, October 8, 2020. <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.uky.edu/docview/2439551996?pq-origsite=primo&accountid=11836>.

<sup>24</sup> Kaviani, Christina Farrah. *The Impact of Smartphones on the Sexual Behaviors of Generation Z College Males*. Fielding Graduate University, PhD dissertation, 2019. *ProQuest*, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.uky.edu/docview/2208433803?pq-origsite=primo>.

religious authority *and* in the US education department according to the 1996 Social Security Act<sup>25</sup> - has hindered progressive sexual education (including the practice of safe sex) throughout the US. Whereas this ideal has remained well-founded due to political and religious push in Generation Z, the Beat Generation was encouraged to embrace abstinence due to societal pressure and conformity. As exemplified in the backlash following the Kinsey report, conservative 1950s American society had a strong disdain for unmarital sex and discussion of pleasure in conversation. Although rebellious, even the Beat Generation's sexual rollickings could not overcome the strong Apollonian values that eventually put their endeavors to bed. Thus, while both generations have made considerable feats in open discussion of sexually explicit material, the reliance on abstinence in education based on societal pressure in the Beat Generation and religious and political influence in Generation Z has overcome both Dionysian attempts.

### Moloch and Cop-italism

Dionysian-prompted inquiry of socio-political climates in both generations has continually questioned the capitalistic order that has governed America. The Red Scare encouraged debate about traditional political ideologies during the Beat generation which was antagonized in Beat literature. Even now, Generation Z is questioning the ethicality of capitalism for social reform with the rise of billionaires and racial inequalities. But the overwhelming conformity of American Apollonian society has remained on the side of conventional governance.

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<sup>25</sup> Santelli, John, et al. "Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage: An Updated Review of U.S. Policies and Programs and Their Impact." *Journal of Adolescent Health*, November 2017. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2017.05.031>.

Even in the witch hunt of the Red Scare, the Beat Generation maintained their boldness by discussing the faults of capitalism in literature. Allen Ginsberg notoriously wrote about the child-sacrificing deity ‘moloch’ in *Howl* to describe the monstrous tendencies of capitalism to tear into the youth by sending them off to war on the basis of efficiency over humanity<sup>26</sup>. Among the rampant McCarthyism of the era, Ginsberg’s poem was highly controversial. Ginsberg’s words faced harsh criticism during the obscenity trial he faced as well<sup>27</sup>.

Just as Ginsberg’s poem uncovered a universal truth, recognizing the danger of capitalism is a deep rooted concept in American politics that has transcended well into the 21st century with Generation Z. The ‘internet revolution’ has allowed capitalism throughout online forums to springboard into institutions like Craigslist and Amazon<sup>28</sup>. But the internet has also revitalized awareness surrounding capitalism being integrated in the privatization of prisons. Racial capitalism is a combination of racist policies among the justice system in order to preserve capitalistic practices including unequally-charged punishment at a price<sup>29</sup>. American greed is characterized in even its most obscure lockboxes as prisons have become corporations to stimulate the ‘criminal justice-industrial complex’<sup>30</sup>. Many of these tenants of racial capitalism arose among the Black Lives Matter movement, largely headed by Generation Z<sup>31</sup>. Following this revelation, many supporters of the Black Lives Matter movement have called for defunding the police in order to sever the direct connection between police corruption and capitalism.

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<sup>26</sup> Ginsberg, Allen. “Howl.” 1947-1980. Poetry Foundation, <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/49303/howl>.

<sup>27</sup> Raskin, Jonah. *American Scream : Allen Ginsberg's Howl and the Making of the Beat Generation*. Boulder: Netlibrary Inc., 2004.

<sup>28</sup> Foster, John Bellamy, and McChesney, Robert W. “The Internet's Unholy Marriage to Capitalism.” *Monthly Review*, March 1, 2003.

<https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.uky.edu/docview/856587826?pq-origsite=primo&accountid=11836>.

<sup>29</sup> Selman, Donna, and Leighton, Paul. *Punishment for Sale*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2010.

<sup>30</sup> Selman, Donna, and Leighton, Paul. *Punishment for Sale*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2010.

<sup>31</sup> White, Khadijah. “Black Lives on Campuses Matter: Reflecting on the Rise of the New Black Student Movement.” *Journal of Politics and Culture*, September 21, 2016. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/627926>.

It is important to mention that while Ginsberg and the Beat Generation tackled capitalism upon exploring communism or defying uniformity, Generation Z's opposition to capitalism is focused on the aspects that correlate to deceit among the justice and racial systems present within the US. That is not to say that the Beat Generation was unaware of this ever present connection but that the observation of capitalism as "blind capitals! demonic industries! [and] spectral nations!"<sup>32</sup> was more outstanding than those under the surface.

Beyond racial tensions, Generation Z has used technology to reveal the corruption of capitalism to uplift the wealth of the upper class while simultaneously promoting poverty. The saying 'eat the rich' embodies the collective view Generation Z has on unethical monetary gluttony especially in the likes of Jeff Bezos and other billionaires<sup>33</sup>. Generation Z's recognition of the way money can easily remedy many social concerns along with the inhumane working conditions of the employees working under these billionaires has encouraged a very Ginsberg-esque outlook upon an American capitalistic system that directly opposes the proposed 'American dream'. In this way, Generation Z and the Beat Generation reflect on how capitalism has caused destruction among the population with little regard for human health. While these social movements in recognizing the faults in American capitalism are compelling

Both movements - literary and literal - consider the dynamic between Dionysian questioning of society in the face of Apollonian standards. But the stain of the red scare is so integrated within the American ideal that even the proposition of universal health care became a threat to national order and an immediate outcry against socialism<sup>34</sup>. This continuous red scare is evidence of Apollonian authority still viewing any rejection of capitalism as a threat as

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<sup>32</sup> Ginsberg, Allen. "Howl." 1947-1980. Poetry Foundation, <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/49303/howl>.

<sup>33</sup> "Eat The Rich." *University Wire*, February 3, 2021. <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.uky.edu/docview/2485994863?pq-origsite=primo&accountid=11836>.

<sup>34</sup> Taylor, Alistair. "OUT ON A LIMB: Universal Healthcare Is America's New Red Scare." *Campbell River Mirror* [Campbell River, British Columbia], October 1, 2013.

demonstrated in the obscenity trial and the continuation of privatization and other capitalist practices. As a result, Apollonian dynamics are much stronger than Dionysian revelations among both generations but the continued awareness of capitalistic corruption has ultimately strengthened the rising sentiment of weariness towards current economic and social outlooks.

### Clay, Lula, and the Apple®

While much of the Beat generation's revolution revolved around a white male-dominated demographic, front runners like Leroy Jones later known as Amiri Baraka developed a strong cultural presence. However, racism remained rampant in the era with interracial marriage continually being perceived as distasteful by 1950s American society - often a topic of inspiration for Jones/Baraka. Similarly, Generation Z is fighting for the degradation of racial stereotypes with the aid of technological advancements like cellphones and social media<sup>35</sup>. Dionysian values are less related to rebellion with these civil rights approaches and more intertwined with the fight against socially adhering Apollonian society members in these cases.

Both Generation Z and Beat Generation attempted to break down the stereotypes surrounding Black people. Leroy Jones/Amiri Baraka headed the intersectional Beat movement with his play, *Dutchman and the Slave* in 1964. *Dutchman and the Slave* highlighted racial stereotypes of Black men and the dynamic between races prevalent in the 1960s. Jones/Baraka has the main character, Clay, a Black man riding a subway interact with a fellow white passenger, Lula. Lula's flirtatious and sexually extravagant body language are highlighted by her eating an apple - biblically referenced as the 'forbidden fruit'<sup>36</sup>. She provokes Clay at one point

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<sup>35</sup> Castillo-Montoya, Milagros, et al. "Racially Liberatory Pedagogy: a Black Lives Matter Approach to Education." *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, October 21, 2019. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.uky.edu/10.1080/09518398.2019.1645904>.

<sup>36</sup> Bent Sørensen. "Dissent as Race War." *Dissent! Refracted: Histories, Aesthetics and Cultures of Dissent*, April 20, 2016. [https://www-jstor-org.ezproxy.uky.edu/stable/j.ctv2t4dpq.6?pp-origsite=summon&seq=1#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www-jstor-org.ezproxy.uky.edu/stable/j.ctv2t4dpq.6?pp-origsite=summon&seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents).

who performs a passionate soliloquy about his struggle as a Black man and the double standards that unfairly confine him among a white world. At the end of his speech, Lula stabs him, killing him effectively before throwing him out of the train. Jones/Baraka's legacy beyond his writing left stamps of progress across the Beat movement even if he himself was unaware of the impact. For one, his marriage and subsequent children with white Beat author Hettie Jones represented Jones/Baraka's inner struggle with accepting his "Blackness" which he eventually concluded to be unauthentic due to this immersion with white culture. This was represented in his name change to Amiri Baraka as a nod to his Black identity. He eventually joined many Black nationalist movements<sup>37</sup>. His actions associated with the Civil Rights movement followed what was a Dionysian action at the time especially within organizations like the Black Panthers who embodied Dionysian values to displace Apollonian segregated society.

It is important to note that while Apollonian society itself does not consider racism to be "good" it allows it to be acceptable due to its tenants of conformity. The inherent Dionysian spirit nestled in differences in opinion and experience and thus, in racial struggle characterize an anti-Apollonian view<sup>38</sup>.

The unknowing Black power movement was grown to fruition within Jones/Baraka's humble efforts. They were his personal revolution. This is the primary distinction between recognizing racial dynamics between Black and white people within the Beat Generation and Generation Z. In Generation Z, the attempt to outline these forces have been intentional especially with the previously mentioned Black Lives Matter movement [see Moloch and Cop-italism]. Further, another comparison includes the shift in Dionysian ideologies to no longer

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<sup>37</sup> Deborah Thompson. "Keeping up with the Joneses: The Naming of Racial Identities in the Autobiographical Writings of LeRoi Jones/Amiri Baraka, Hettie Jones, and Lisa Jones." *College Literature*, January 1, 2002. <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.uky.edu/docview/229646769?pq-origsite=primo&accountid=11836>.

<sup>38</sup> Morsi, Yassir. "Melbourne's Islamic Museum of Australia: The 'White-Washed I'" as an Apollonian Celebration of Liberal Myths." *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, April 3, 2015. doi:10.1080/13602004.2015.1051755.



include the Civil Rights movement due to the liberation it brought Black people (and thus perceived “goodness” of the movement associated with Apollonian society). Despite this category shift, the new Civil Rights movement following the Black Lives Matter campaign has followed suit with 1960s American distaste for racial equality. Apollonian society generalized by the Baby Boomer generation has continued a pushback against the movement. Beyond the Black Lives Matter movement, however, technology in Generation Z has created avenues of social change. For one, it has stimulated further recognition of Black power and racial disparities. One such instance includes the hashtag “#OscarsSoWhite”<sup>39</sup> and the proceeding “GrammysSoWhite” campaigns. Each of these technological revolutions have aimed to identify racial disparities in the film industry. While the Black Lives Matter movement better embraces Dionysian values of rebellion with its polarization, these technological revolutions represent subsections of the overall national movement. As a result, the racial equality campaigns headed by Generation Z are more intertwined than in comparison to the Beat Generation where Leroi Jones/Amiri Baraka was one of the only documented examples of Beat Black literary expression.

Beyond Leroi Jones/Amiri Baraka there were attempts by diverse authors to become players in the Beat generation literary game like in the case of Oscar Zeta Acosta<sup>40</sup> but his rejection by most Beat generation literary scholars demonstrates another case of racial disparity within the Beat generation that is absent from Generation Z: the rejection of diversity. As a result, while the Beat Generation includes some aspects of Dionysian values carried upon the backs of Leroi Jones/Amiri Baraka and his attempts at manifesting acceptance through art,

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<sup>39</sup> “Oscars So White (Again).” *University Wire*, January 24, 2020.

<https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.uky.edu/docview/2344280408?pq-origsite=primo&accountid=11836>.

<sup>40</sup> A. Robert Lee. "Chicanismo's Beat Outrider? The Texts and Contexts of Oscar Zeta Acosta." *College Literature*, January 1, 2000.

<https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.uky.edu/docview/1298101871?pq-origsite=primo&accountid=11836&imgSeq=1>.

Generation Z with its technological strides has allowed for further pushback against collectively racist Apollonian views.

### Conclusion

As Generation Z continues to make strides as a continuation of Dionysian Beat legacies, the similarities pose a startling threat to Apollonian values. But as Everson originally intended, Apollonian and Dionysian thought must act in balance in order to preserve society<sup>41</sup>. Thus, as frustrating as the attempts for progressiveness have been, political polarization is necessary for national diversity and inner advancement. Too much leniency in the form of Dionysian thought and action may lead to disorder within a society and can be attributed to “toxic optimism”<sup>42</sup>. The phenomenon of “toxic optimism” follows an intrinsic need for faux-happiness; it is a tattoo of ‘rose colored glasses’. Dionysius with his extravagance allows for “toxic optimism” in the form of dispassionate flexibility and a ‘go with the flow attitude’ over total complacency<sup>43</sup>. And while both extremes pose their own threats to society, overtly embracing lunacy over rigidity can lead to a dangerous regression of social progress.

Generation Z and the Beat Generation’s development of social change by openly discussing ‘taboo’ topics in true Dionysian fashion is thus something that must be approached with steady pushback from Apollonian society as well as constant discussion. In recognizing the faults in both rational and lenient reliance, society can remain. However, this brings up a

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<sup>41</sup> Rizzo, Fred Frank. A Study of The Poetry of William Everson. The University of Oklahoma, PhD dissertation, 1966. ProQuest, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.uky.edu/docview/302195961?pq-origsite=primo>.

<sup>42</sup> Steel, Sean. “On the Need for Dionysian Education in Schools Today.” *Educational Theory*, April 2014. doi:10.1111/edth.12053.

<sup>43</sup> Loney, Sydney. “EVERYTHING [Begin Strikethrough]IS[End Strikethrough] Isn't AWESOME.” *Chatelaine*, January 2, 2021. <http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.uky.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ulh&AN=148224792&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

profound ideology concerning whether society should remain as is or if the overwhelming power of one thought over the other should determine the reconstruction of American community. This is to question whether the dominance of Dionysian values or Apollonian values would effectively establish a social revolution or dystopia although further analysis would be necessary.

All in all, even in the thought of one society triumphing over the other, both the Beat Generation and Generation Z accepted their actions as the minority in the face of Apollonian order. While Generation Z has objectively been more successful at destigmatizing social issues and encouraging progressivism especially with the media and increased use of technology, the Beat Generation's unknowing social strides better encompass the Dionysian spirit. This is evident in the artists of the Beat Generation who wrote social revolutions from inner struggle, not necessarily for public change. In the case of *Howl*<sup>44</sup> and *Queer*<sup>45</sup>, for example, these literary movements were simply an attempt at understanding oneself, never intended to spark fires in a new generation. They perfectly capture the irrationality and 'madness' of the Dionysian spirit. Conversely, Generation Z's purposeful organization of online revolutions and protests have allowed them to channel politics within their values, achieving success in social change on a larger magnitude while supporting Dionysian values.

This concludes the final similarity between these two generations as defined by the ever constant presence of Apollonian thought even with inquiry towards free love and sexuality, capitalism and exploration of communism, socialization of drugs, and racial disparity. As polarization grows and Apollo and Dionysius continue their centuries old clash of worldviews, one thing remains constant: the continuation of the Beat legacy among the fight for progressiveness in Generation Z. Even within the differences in both movements with the Beat

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<sup>44</sup> Ginsberg, Allen. "Howl." 1947-1980. Poetry Foundation, <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/49303/howl>.

<sup>45</sup> Burroughs, William. *Queer*. New York: Viking Press, 1985.

Generation's humble attempts at becoming great authors and freely expressing themselves and Generation Z's attempt for social change, there lies the overwhelming truth. The similarities between both generations' pursuits of social change has now left powerful poems for generations yet to come all circling back with the Beat Generation, who created waves of reformation in secret.

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