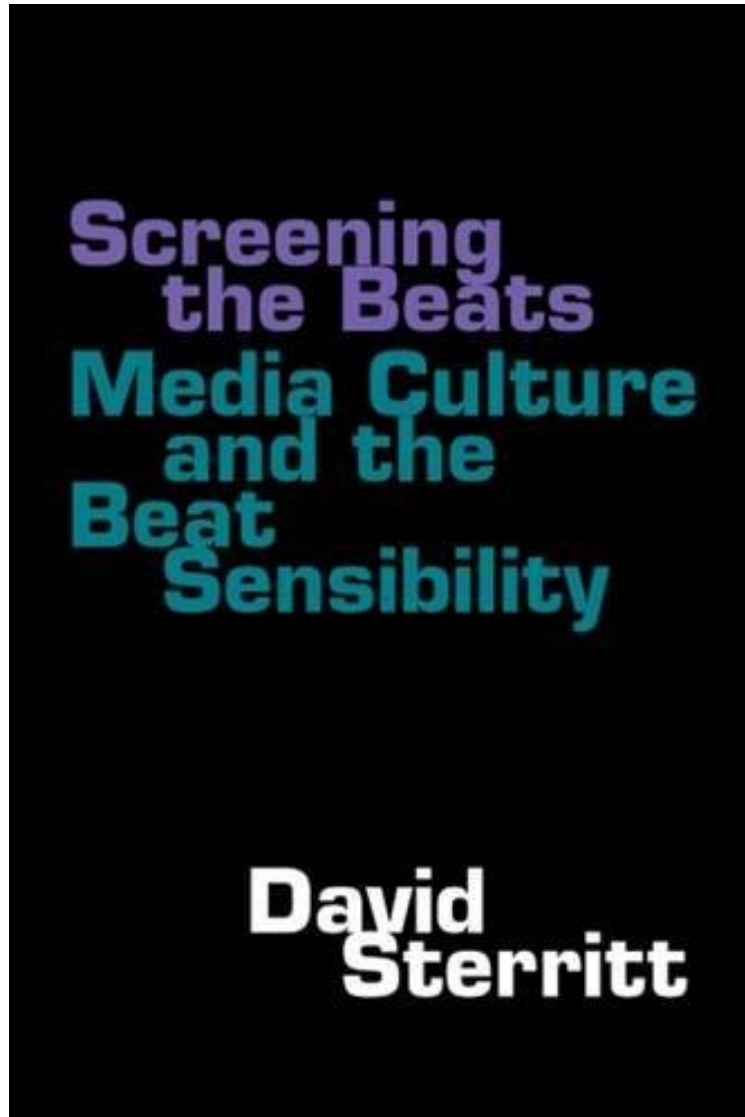


## Screening the Beats: Media Culture and the Beat Sensibility

*Professor Emeritus David Sterritt*

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**Professor Emeritus David Sterritt : Screening the Beats: Media Culture and the Beat Sensibility** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Screening the Beats: Media Culture and the Beat Sensibility:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Like, far out, man !!By A CustomerThis is like Part 2 of "Mad to be Saved," dealing with the beat generation in the movies. An amazing read.Highly recommended!

Film critic David Sterritts Screening the Beats: Media Culture and the Beat Sensibility showcases the social and

aesthetic viewpoints of lynchpin Beat writers Jack Kerouac, William S. Burroughs, and Allen Ginsberg, juxtaposing their artistry with 1950s culture and achieving what Kerouac might have called a bookmovie riff. In clear prose, Sterritt captures the raw energy of the Beats and joins in their celebration of aesthetic freakishness. Tapping into the diversified spirit of the Beat Generation and its nuanced relationship with postwar American culture, Sterritt considers how the Beats variously foreground, challenge, and illuminate major issues in Hollywood and avant-garde film, critical and cultural theory, and music in the mass-media age. Sterritt engages the creative and spiritual facets of the Beats, emulating their desire to evoke ephemeral aspects of human existence. Dealing with both high and low cultures as well as various subcultures, he highlights the complementary contributions to cultural creativity made by these authors. Screening the Beats grapples with paradoxes in Beat writing, in particular the conflict between spiritual purity and secular connectedness, which often materialized in the beatific bebop spontaneity, Zen-like transcendentalism, and plain hipster smarts that characterized the writings of Kerouac, Burroughs, and Ginsberg. This interdisciplinary study tackles such topics as Ginsberg's and Kerouac's uses of racial and ethnic stereotypes prevalent in the popular movies of the 1950s era; the uses and limitations of improvisation as a creative tool in literature, jazz, and film; Kerouac's use of cinematic metaphor to evoke Buddhist concepts; and intersections of the grotesque and carnivalesque in works as seemingly diverse as autobiographical novels by Kerouac, a radio play by Antonin Artaud, cultural theories of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, and the boisterous lunacy of Three Stooges farce. Deftly threading literary, musical, and cinematic works with a colorful array of critical theories, *Screening the Beats* illuminates the relationship between American culture and the imaginative forces of the Beat Generation.

David Sterritt has followed up on the valuable scholarship of his 1998 study, *Mad to Be Saved*, with this equally excellent analysis. Combining his skills as an astute commentator on beat aesthetics, film, and the post-war ethos at large, he situates the beats squarely in a tradition that is not entirely literary, expanding our sense of their considerable impact on cultural genres that were simultaneously influencing them. This work contributes much to the current reappraisal of beat literature as art. Regina Weinreich, author of *Kerouac's Spontaneous Poetics: A Study of the Fiction* and editor of *Jack Kerouac's Book of Haikus*