

7-2-2010

Jack Kerouac: Le Sel de la Semaine

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Repository Citation

Ipri, T. A. (2010). Jack Kerouac: Le Sel de la Semaine. *Educational Media Reviews Online* 1. University at Buffalo Libraries.

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Jack Kerouac Le Sel de la Semaine

2010 (orig 1967)

Distributed by [Icarus Films](#), 32 Court St., 21st Floor, Brooklyn, NY 11201; 800-876-1710

Producer n/a

Director n/a

DVD, b&w, 30 min.

Sr. High - Adult

Literature, American Studies

Reviewed by [Tom Ipri, University of Nevada Las Vegas](#)

Highly Recommended

Date Entered: 7/2/2010

In 1967, Jack Kerouac appeared on the French service of the Canadian Broadcasting Service on the program *Le Sel de la a Semaine*. This Icarus Films release takes a fascinating look at Kerouac's connection to Quebec where his parents are from. This interview by Fernand Seguin took place just 2 years before Kerouac's death, making the program all the more poignant.

The interview was conducted entirely in French, so viewers get a rare glimpse of Kerouac speaking the language he grew up learning. Segund asks Kerouac to talk about his childhood with an emphasis on his French-Canadian lineage. Because Kerouac's more famous writings emphasize his experiences in the United States and because he helped create a uniquely "American" literature, these close ties to Canada aren't often discussed. The program also includes a segment with interviews of other people with French-Canadian backgrounds living in Kerouac's hometown of Lowell, MA, which further emphasizes the importance of this immigrant experience to Kerouac.

Kerouac also talks about his writing, most specifically about *On the Road* and is defensive about being called a Beatnik. He explicitly says that the book is not about a couple of Beatniks and discusses the origin of the term "Beat" and how it was co-opted to become the pejorative term "Beatnik."

The quality of the footage reflects the age and origin of the program. The interview is very evocative of the time. Both Kerouac and Seguin smoke. A jazz band plays in the background. Men in the audience wear suits. Those wearing glasses wear awful glasses.

This program is **highly recommended** because of this rare chance to witness Kerouac speaking in French and discussing the immigrant experience of his family. It should be noted that this is a rather specialized look at Kerouac and would not be well-suited as an introduction to his life and works. It would be best enjoyed by those with some prior knowledge of Kerouac.