

# American Writing (& Culture) ENGL204





# **The Mayflower transported the first English Puritans, known as the Pilgrims, from Plymouth England to the New World in 1620**



**12000 years in US**

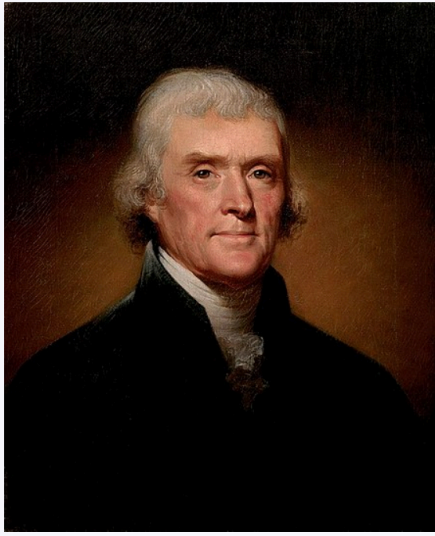


**From 1619**





Thomas Jefferson



3rd President of the United States

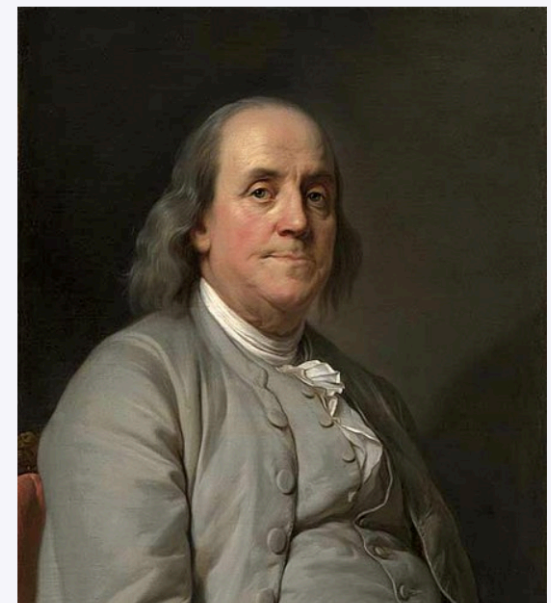
# The **American Revolutionary War** (1775–1783), also known as the **American War of Independence**

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

## July 4, 1776

Benjamin Franklin

FRS, FRSA, FRSE





1886

## Emma Lazarus

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,  
With conquering limbs astride from land to  
land;  
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall  
stand

A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame  
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name  
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand  
Glow world-wide welcome; her mild eyes  
command

The air-bridged harbor that twin cities  
frame.

“Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!”  
cries she

With silent lips. “Give me your tired, your  
poor,

Your huddled masses yearning to breathe  
free,

The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to  
me,

I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”









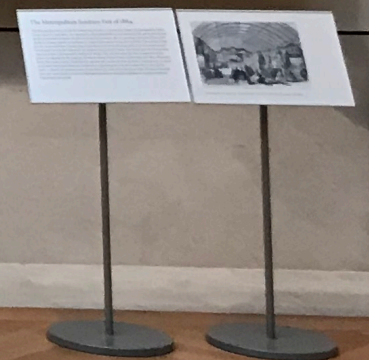
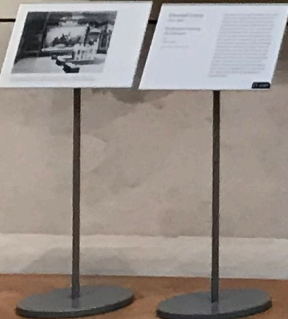


**George Washington 1732-1799**  
**First President of the USA 1789-1797**



**King George III 1738-1820**  
**King from 1760-1820**





**December 25, 1776**







# Albert Bierstadt

(1830–1902)

## The Rocky Mountains, Lander's Peak

1863

Oil on canvas

Rogers Fund, 1907  
07.123

 4354  1139 **F**

This and other popular canvases by the German-born Albert Bierstadt shaped the visual identity of the American West in the United States and abroad. Stemming from an expedition the artist had made in 1859 to present-day Wyoming and Utah with Colonel Frederick W. Lander, the painting advertised a frontier destined to be claimed by white settlers according to the doctrine of Manifest Destiny—the belief that Americans were the divinely ordained masters of the continent—notwithstanding the Indian encampment depicted in the foreground. Publicly exhibited to great acclaim, the monumental painting made Bierstadt a rival of the preeminent landscape painter, Frederic Edwin Church.



Thomas Hart Benton (April 15, 1889 – January 19, 1975)





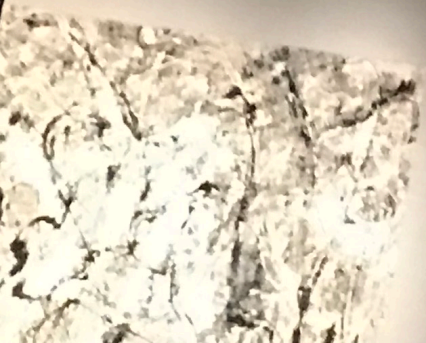
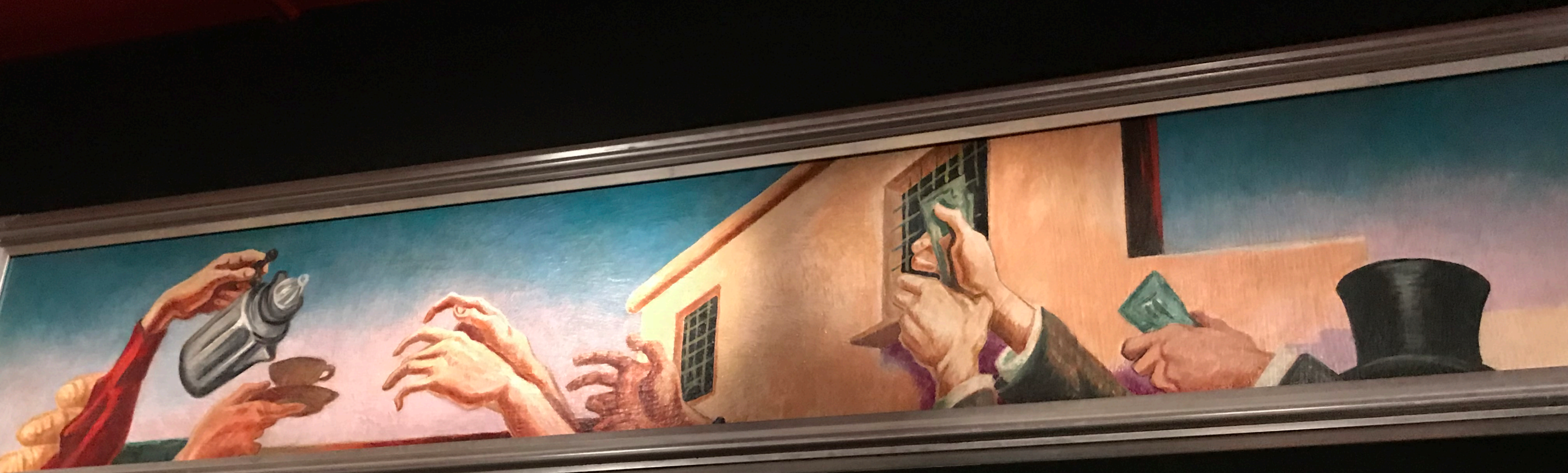






**THE AMERICAN SCENE**  
Diego Rivera's mural, 'The American Scene,' is a masterpiece of social realism. It depicts a variety of American life, from the industrial revolution to the Native American presence. The central figure, a Native American man, symbolizes the enduring spirit of the land. The mural is a powerful statement on the complexities of American society.







# AMERICAN LITERARY MOVEMENTS

## Native American (Before 1600)



Characterized by oral traditions, epic poems, creation myths, songs, and poetry. Native American literature has been around long before the settlers arrived. Recently, authors like Sherman Alexie have revived stories of American Indians with his stories, which give insight into life on the reservation.

1600 CE

William Bradford's Journal of the Pilgrim's Experience in New England 1620

## Puritanism or Colonial (1620-1750)



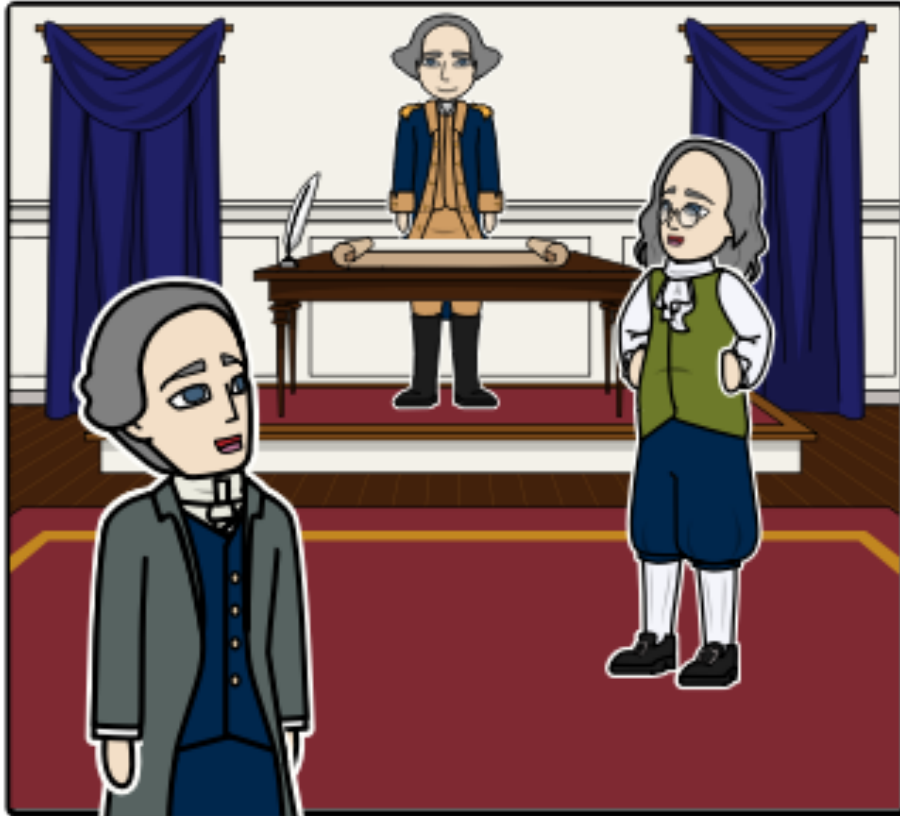
Characterized by their desire to 'purify' the Church of England with the simple worship of God, Puritans left England to colonize the new world. As settlers, they recorded their experiences through diaries and historical accounts.

1620 CE

Native American Writing- before and after  
1600



## Revolutionary, Age of Reason, Enlightenment (1750-1800)



Characterized by human desire to understand the world around them through reason rather than faith. This era was mostly composed of philosophers and scientists whose writing sparked an enlightenment in thought.

Benjamin Franklin (1722) &  
Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* (1774)

**1789**  
The autobiography of Olaudah Equiano, a slave captured as a child in Africa, becomes a best-seller on both sides of the Atlantic

1750 CE

**American Revolution  
1765-1783**

1800 CE

**1776 Thomas Jefferson's Declaration of Independence: all men are born equally free...**

**George Washington  
1st President  
1789-1797**

**1826** James Fenimore Cooper *The Last of the Mohicans*

Herman Melville  
Edgar Allan Poe

## Romanticism, American Gothic (1800-1865)



This era valued feeling, intuition, and idealism. It placed faith in inner experience and imagination. Individual freedom and the worth of the individual was paramount, and poetry was seen as the highest expression of the mind. Dark Romantics or American Gothic writers used dark supernatural themes and settings.



## Transcendentalism (1840-1860)



Transcendentalists advocated self-reliance and individualism over authority and conformity to tradition, believing institutions and organizations were responsible for corrupting the inherent goodness of people. In their writing, transcendentalists commonly reflected on nature, a unified "divine spirit", common to all people, and community.

**1836** Ralph Waldo Emerson's *Nature* sets out the fundamentals of Transcendentalism

**1845** Thoreau moves to Walden Ponds

**1855** Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*

**1862** Emily Dickinson writes 300 poems in a year

1840 CE

**American Civil War  
1861-1865**

**Abraham Lincoln  
President- 1861-1865**



1865 CE

**1881** Henry James  
Washington Square

**1863** Mark Twain( Samuel Clemens)  
comes on the scene

**1885** Mark Twain publishes  
*Huckleberry Finn*

**1893 Dvorak's New World Symphony-  
with American Indian & Negro Motifs.**

**1895** Stephen Crane  
*The Red Badge of  
Courage*

## Realism, Naturalism & Regionalism (1865-1914, 1930, 1895)



This movement was marked by feelings of disillusionment. Familiar subjects included ghettos of rapidly growing cities, the industrial revolution, and corrupt politicians. Authors focused on painting a realistic setting of everyday life and ordinary people, including local color, while also seeking to explain human behavior.



## Modernism (1914-1945)



Beginning as an extension of realism, this era broke with literary and poetic traditions. Authors were bold and experimental in style; an example being "stream of consciousness". Modernist literature can seem bleak, but is characterized by the optimistic belief that people can change the world around them.

**1902** Langston Hughes  
leader of the Harlem  
Renaissance

**1913** Robert Frost  
*Mending Wall*

**1914 CE**



**1917 CE**

**1930** William  
Faulkner *As I  
Lay Dying*

**1944** Robert  
Lowell *Life  
Studies*

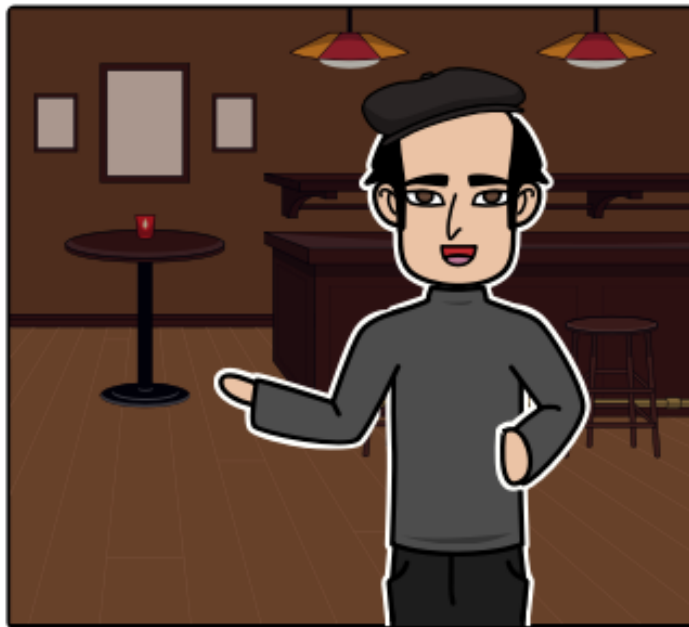
James  
Baldwin,  
Martin  
Luther King,  
Alice Walker,  
Toni  
Morrison

## Lost Generation, Jazz Age, Roaring 20's & The Harlem Renaissance (1917-1937)



African American culture in Harlem, New York was flourishing. Much of the style derived from poetry rhythms based on spirituals, and jazz lyrics on the blues, and the use of slang in everyday diction. These influences intersected with prohibition, reactions to WWI, and the sultry nightlife of the big city to produce an energetic progressive culture.

## Beat Generation (1950-1965)



A small group of authors whose literature explored and influenced American culture, post-World War II. The Beats were against the prudery of their parents' generation and promoted sex and sexuality as healthy topics of discussion. Beat hipsters defied modest America, with their hedonistic bohemianism and celebration of nonconforming creativity.

**1957** Jack  
Kerouac *On the  
Road*  
Allen Ginsberg  
Frank O'Hara  
John Asberry

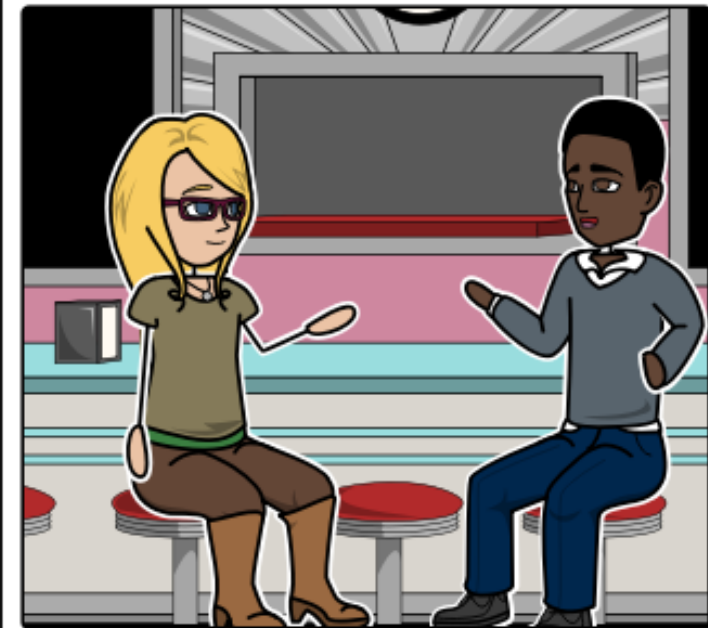
**1949 CE**

**1950ff**  
Theodore  
Roethke,  
Elizabeth  
Bishop, Denise  
Levertov, Mary  
Oliver, Galway  
Kinnell, Gary  
Snyder...

**1950 CE**

**2000**  
Dorothy  
Alison, Joan  
Didion, Junot  
Diaz etc..

## Contemporary/Postmodernism (1950-Present)



Literature in this period was influenced by studies of media, language, and information technology. It is marked by the fact that nothing is truly "unique" and the conception that our culture endlessly duplicates itself. New literary forms and techniques focused on intense dialog, a blend of fiction and nonfiction, and the overall appearance of the work.



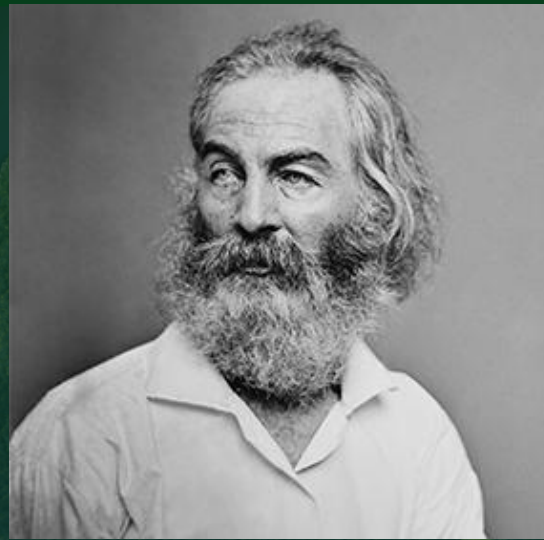
# *Introduction to American Literature*



**Section 1: The Nineteenth Century: Transcendentalism, Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Mark Twain, Native American Writing**  
**Section 2: The Early Twentieth Century: African American Harlem School- Langston Hughes, James Baldwin, Alice Walker, William Carlos Williams, Hart Crane, Modernism- William Carlos Williams, T.S. Eliot**  
**Section 3: The Mid-Twentieth Century: The Beats: J.D. Salinger; Jack Kerouac; Allen Ginsberg; Frank O'Hara.**  
**Section 4: The Later Twentieth and Early Twenty-first Centuries: Maya Angelou; Paul Dunbar; James Baldwin; 2 Pac. Conclusion: Rober Frost and Robert Lowell.**



# Walt Whitman (1819-1892)



Life and Background

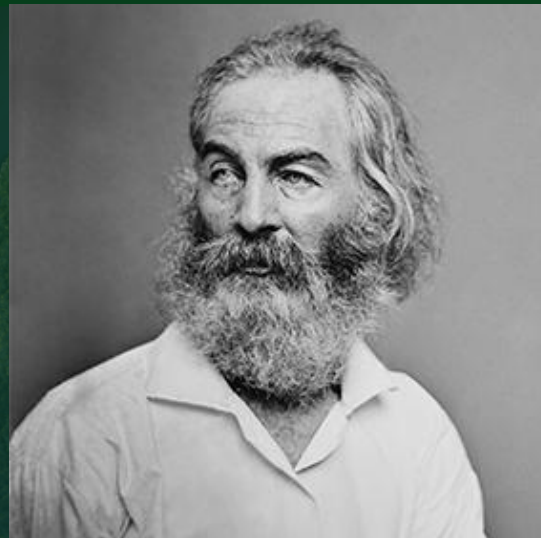
“Song of Myself”

*Leaves of Grass*

“Democratic Vistas”



# Walt Whitman (1819-1892) “Mannahatta”



I was asking for something specific and perfect for my city,  
Whereupon lo! upsprang the aboriginal name.

Now I see what there is in a name, a word, liquid, sane,  
unruly, musical, self-sufficient,

I see that the word of my city is that word from of old,  
Because I see that word nested in nests of water-bays,  
superb,

Rich, hemm'd thick all around with sailships and  
steamships, an island sixteen miles long, solid-founded,

Numberless crowded streets, high growths of iron, slender,  
strong, light, splendidly uprising toward clear skies,

Tides swift and ample, well-loved by me, toward sundown,  
The flowing sea-currents, the little islands, larger adjoining  
islands, the heights, the villas,

The countless masts, the white shore-steamers, the lighters,  
the ferry-boats, the black sea-steamers well-model'd,

The down-town streets, the jobbers' houses of business, the  
houses of business of the ship-merchants and money-  
brokers, the river-streets,

Immigrants arriving, fifteen or twenty thousand in a week,

The carts hauling goods, the manly race of drivers of horses,  
the brown-faced sailors,

The summer air, the bright sun shining, and the sailing  
clouds aloft,

The winter snows, the sleigh-bells, the broken ice in the  
river, passing along up or down with the flood-tide or  
ebb-tide,

The mechanics of the city, the masters, well-form'd,  
beautiful-faced, looking you straight in the eyes,

Trottoirs throng'd, vehicles, Broadway, the women, the  
shops and shows,

A million people--manners free and superb--open voices--  
hospitality--the most courageous and friendly young  
men,

City of hurried and sparkling waters! city of spires and masts!

City nested in bays! my city!







# Emily Dickinson 1830-1886



*Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul  
- and sings the tunes without the words - and never  
stops at all.*

*Forever is composed of nows.*

*Tell the truth, but tell it slant.*



**BLAST**

# Modernism- International

**Slide 3**

**Franz Marc**



Marcel Duchamp

**Freud**

**The Interpretation  
of Dreams**



- **Imagism** (T.E. Hulme Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, HD, William Carlos Williams...),
- **Primitivism** (Lawrence, Picasso),
- **Expressionism** (Franz Marc, Franz Kafka...)
- **Surrealism** (Virginia Woolf- Stream of Consciousness, Salvador Dali),
- **Dadaism, Cubism, Vorticism** (Wyndham Lewis, Ezra Pound...)
- **Free Verse, *Vers Libres*** (T.S.Eliot, Ezra Pound and others)
- **Dissolution of Conventional Forms** (Kandinski, T.S. Eliot, Woolf, Joyce and others)

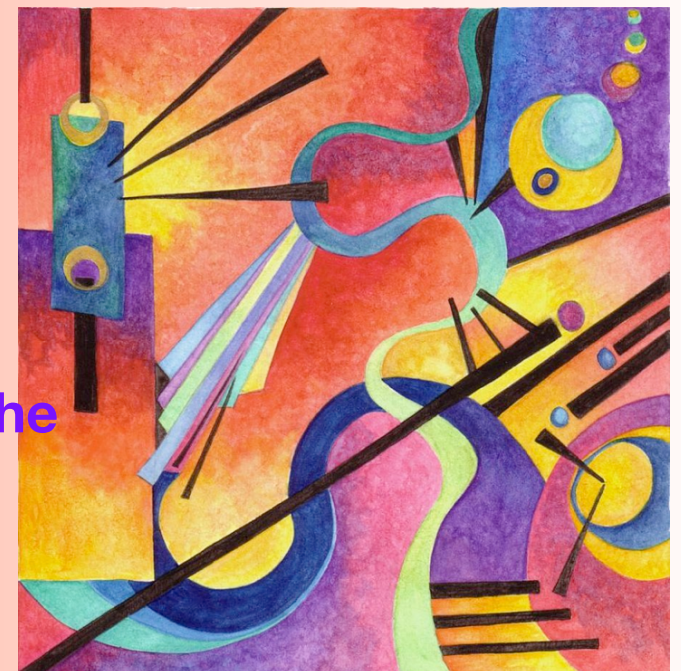


**Gaudier-Brzeska 1914**



**Jung**

**Psychology of the  
Unconscious**





# Lecture 3: The Early 20th Century:

## *The Great Gatsby Plus....*

**Slide 1**



Charles Demuth  
*I Saw the Figure  
5 in Gold*  
1928



**Thomas Hart Benton *America Today*, 1928 MET**

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/online-features/metcollects/benton-murals>



<http://www.dailyartdaily.com/charles-demuth-figure-5/>



# Imagism

Charles Demuth  
"The Figure 5 in Gold"

Futurism

Slide 2

## The Great Figure

William Carlos Williams

Among the rain

and lights

I saw the figure 5

in gold

on a red

fire truck

moving

tense

unheeded

to gong clangs

siren howls

and wheels rumbling

through the dark city



Even children are drawn, viscerally, to "The Figure 5 in Gold," one of the most recognizable works in American Modernism. Painted in 1928, its vibrant red, black and gold fire-engine motif barrels at the viewer, delivering a "Pow!" that Pop artists strived to achieve a few decades later. Somehow, the bold image manages to transmit not only the speed but also the screams of a fire truck weaving its way through a crowded New York street.



# Jazz & Blues: 1920s-30s

## Slide 3

"But jazz to me is one of the inherent expressions of Negro life in America; the eternal tom-tom beating in the Negro soul--the tom-tom of revolt against weariness in a white world, a world of subway trains, and work, work, work; the tom-tom of joy and laughter, and pain swallowed in a smile."

--Langston Hughes, "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain" (1926)



<https://youtu.be/uM7HSOwJw20>

<https://youtu.be/b-saLgWEu8Q>



Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington

"Jazz is a good barometer of freedom. In its beginnings, the United States spawned certain ideals of freedom and independence through which, eventually, jazz was evolved, and the music is so free that many people say it is the only unhampered, unhindered expression of complete freedom yet produced in this country."

--Duke Ellington



# Lecture 5: Late 20th/ Early 21st Centuries: Maya Angelou, James Baldwin ... 2Pac

Slide 1

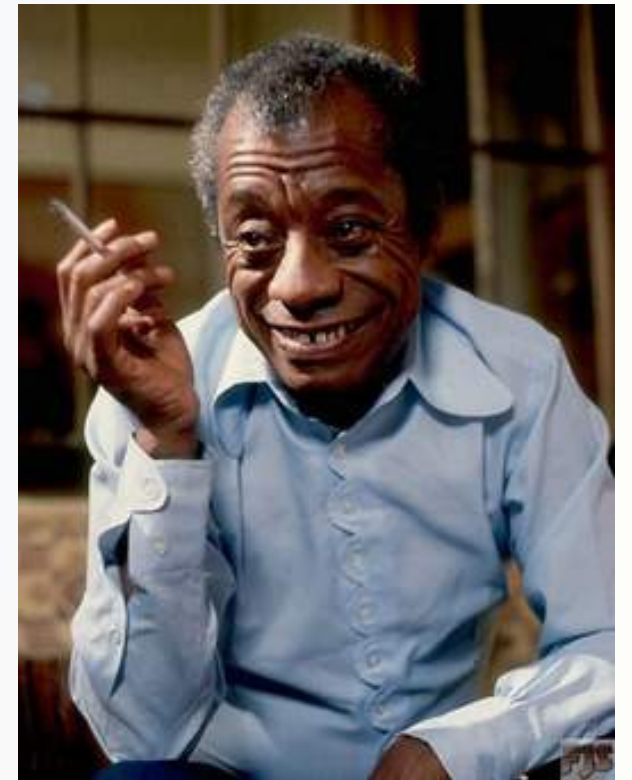


Maya Angelou 1928-2014



Paul Laurence  
Dunbar 1872-1906

2 Pac: Tupac  
Amaru Shakur  
1971-1996

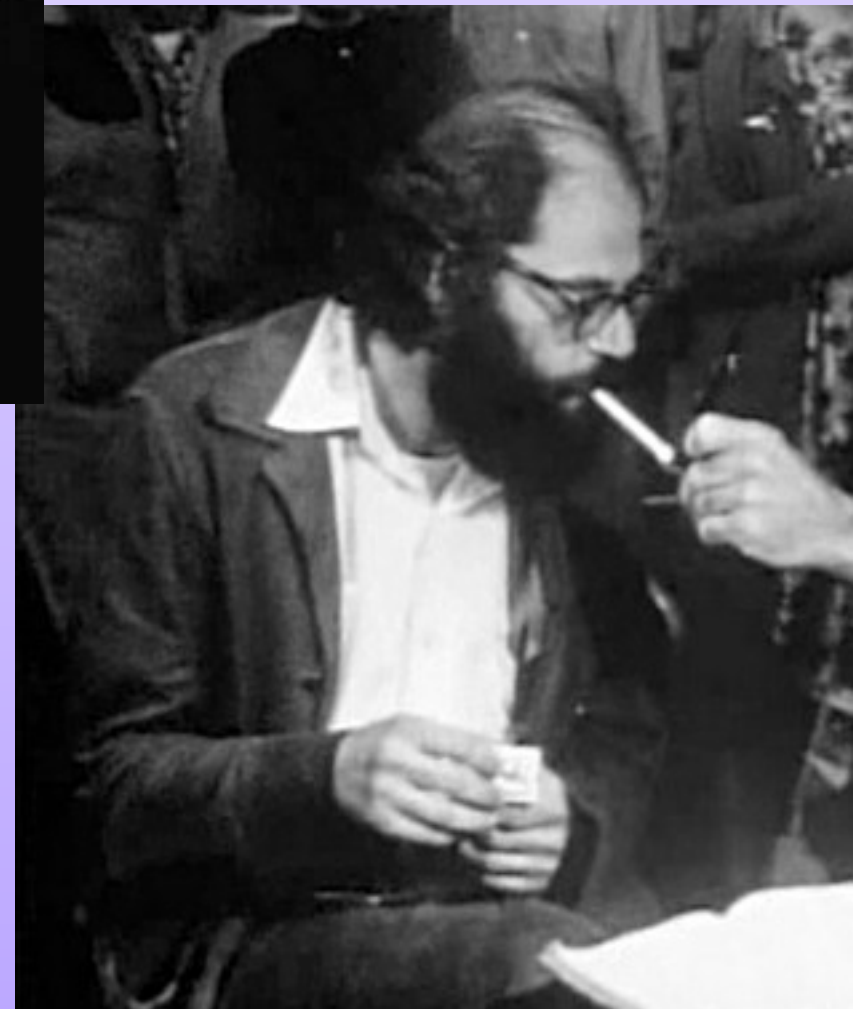


James Baldwin 1924-1987





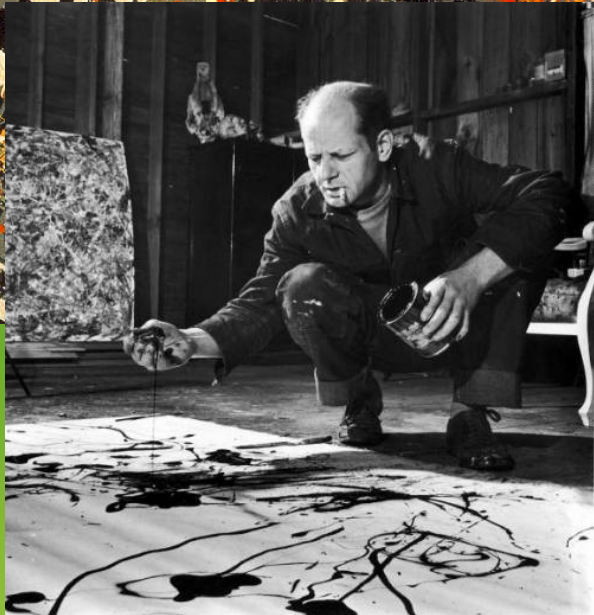
## Lecture 4: The Mid-20th Century: J.D. Salinger; The Beats; The New York School of Artists and Poets







Jackson  
Pollock



# The Beats, New York School, Postmodernism

Slide 8

Jack Kerouac  
Allen Ginsberg  
Frank O'Hara  
John Ashberry

<https://youtu.be/VYGCxz-WCOA>  
The Beat Generation

Beat= **beatific**

Beat= beaten

Beat= rhythm

Bob Dylan

Rolling Stones

**Beatles**

I'm going down to Puerto Rico  
I'm going down on the midnight plane  
I'm going down on the Vomit Express  
I'm going down with my suitcase pain.

You can take an ancient vacation  
fly over Florida's deep-blue end  
rise up out of this mad-house nation  
I'm going down with my oldest tender friend



Allen Ginsberg & Bob Dylan - Vomit Express

<https://youtu.be/NsvRtb9QB3M>



# Slide 9



"It's not that I can't fall in love. It's really that I can't help falling in love with too many things all at once So, you must understand why I can't distinguish between what's platonic and what isn't, because it's all too much and not enough at the same time."

— Jack Kerouac

## Today

Oh! kangaroos, sequins, chocolate sodas!  
You really are beautiful! Pearls,  
harmonicas, jujubes, aspirins! all  
the stuff they've always talked about

still makes a poem a surprise!  
These things are with us every day  
even on beachheads and biers. They  
do have meaning. They're strong as rocks.

Frank O'Hara

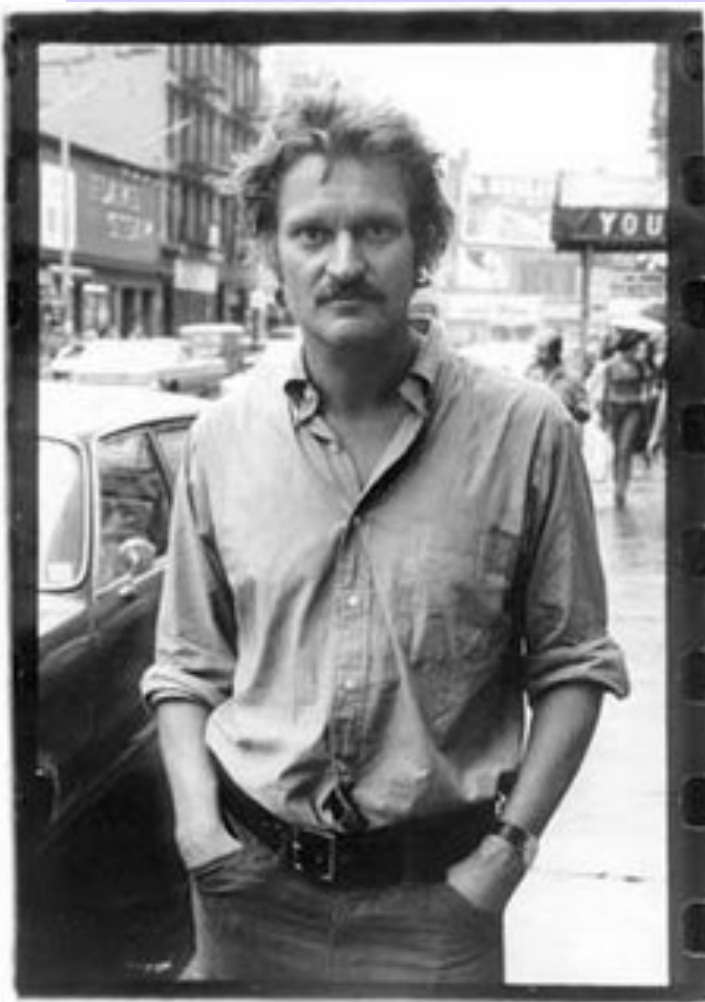


There is the view that  
poetry should improve your  
life. I think people confuse  
it with the Salvation Army.

John Ashbery

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Without even  
intending it,  
there is that  
little shiver of a  
moment in time  
preserved in the  
crystal cabinet of  
the mind. A little  
shiver of eternal  
space. That's what  
I was looking for.

Allen Ginsberg





## Jack Kerouac 1922-1969

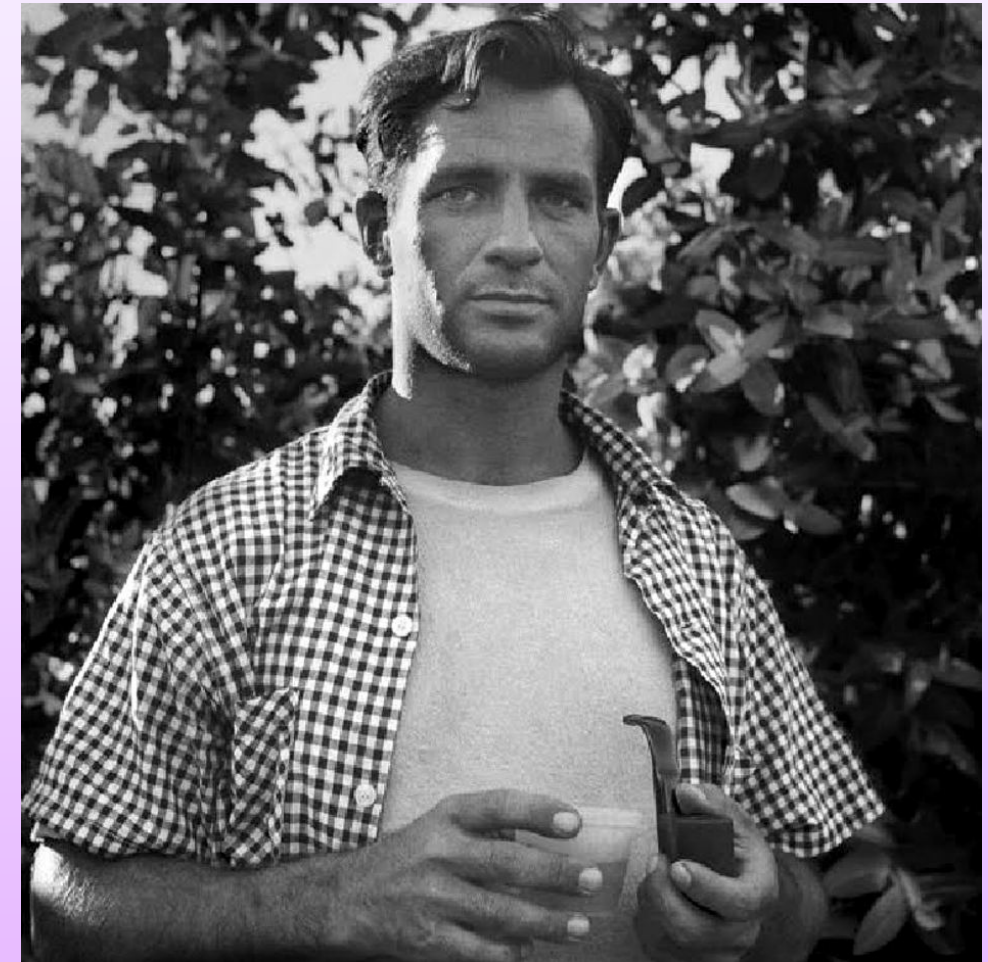


<https://youtu.be/3LLpNKO09Xk>  
Jack Kerouac- only film footage

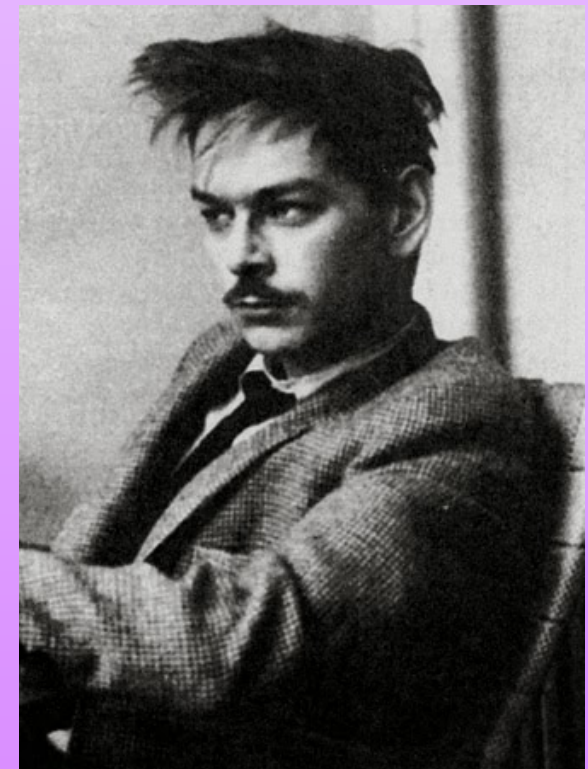
<https://youtu.be/CD4ofEoUpxE>  
Kerouac interviewed by William J Buckley

<https://youtu.be/WiwYsYNh3ao>  
Kerouac and Ginsberg- in East Village New York  
Harmony Bar and Restaurant

<https://youtu.be/9iXgtLqpJmE>  
Audio book of *Big Sur*



Lucien Carr





# Abstract Expressionism



**Willem de Kooning 1904-1997**



Woman has manifested herself in de Kooning's paintings and drawings as at once the focus of desire, frustration, inner conflict, pleasure, ... and as posing problems of conception and handling as demanding as those of an engineer



**Jackson Pollock 1912-1956**







# Patti Smith

## 1946...

### Slide 16

<https://youtu.be/LNnC8hYOmlw>

**I do a lot of my work to inspire people... inspire them in all different ways – cerebrally, sexually, spiritually. I always hope people will have some kind of orgasms from my work, whether just a sense of relaxation, a sense of release...an illimination! ...and also a good laugh!**

**"Rock N Roll Nigger"**

Baby was a black sheep. Baby was a whore.

Baby got big and baby get bigger.

Baby get something. Baby get more.

Baby, baby, baby was a rock-and-roll nigger.

Oh, look around you, all around you,  
riding on a copper wave.

Do you like the world around you?

Are you ready to behave?

Outside of society, they're waitin' for me.

Outside of society, that's where I want to be...

Jimi Hendrix was a nigger.

Jesus Christ and Grandma, too.

Jackson Pollock was a nigger.

Nigger, nigger, nigger, nigger,

nigger, nigger, nigger.

Outside of society, they're waitin' for me.

Outside of society, if you're looking,

That's where you'll find me.

Outside of society, they're waitin' for me.

Outside of society.





**“The poem is the  
chronicle of the creative  
act that produces it”  
John Ashberry**

## Frank O'Hara 1926-1966

<https://youtu.be/344TyqLISFA>

**Frank O'Hara Reading**

<https://youtu.be/YDLwivcpFe8>

**Frank O'Hara “Having a Coke with You”**

<https://youtu.be/nWiB2bmDa4I>

**Frank O'Hara reading Lunch Time Poems**





# Jackson Pollock 1912-1956:

## *Autumn Rhythm 1945*





## Tupac Shakur 1971-1996

**Lesane Parish Crooks A.K.A. Tupak Shakur 2Pac/ Pac (shining serpent) [1971-1996] packed a lot of living into his short life. A poet, rapper, Lyricist, screenwriter and much much more. He was born in New York City, New York June 16, 1971. As a member of the group, "digital underground", Tupac's career began. Just as the group became award winners, Shakur released his first album, "2pacalypes Now", which was a great success.**

**While maintaining a "thug" composure, Tupac also radiated a cultural consciousness that made him easily adaptable to young and old alike. His talents also landed him in motion pictures where he was an outstanding screen-performer.**

**The Rose That Grew From Concrete**

**Did you hear about the rose that grew  
from a crack in the concrete?**

**Proving nature's law is wrong it  
learned to walk with out having feet.**

**Funny it seems, but by keeping its dreams,  
it learned to breathe fresh air.**

**Long live the rose that grew from concrete  
when no one else ever cared.**

