

Soldiers Question the War

Tjaden: Oh, that's it. I shouldn't be here at all. I don't feel offended.

Katzinsky: (*joking*) It don't apply to tramps like you.

Tjaden: Good. Then I can be going home right away . . . The Kaiser and me . . . Me and the Kaiser felt just alike about this war. We didn't neither of us want any war, so I'm going home. He's there already.

Soldier: Somebody must have wanted it. Maybe it was the English. No, I don't want to shoot any Englishmen. I never saw one 'til I came up here. And I suppose most of them never saw a German 'til they came up here. No, I'm sure they weren't asked about it.

Another Soldier: Well, it must be doing somebody some good.

Tjaden: Not me and the Kaiser.

Soldier: I think maybe the Kaiser wanted a war.

Tjaden: You leave us out of this.

Katzinsky: I don't see that. The Kaiser's got everything he needs.

Soldier: Well, he never had a war before. Every full-grown emperor needs one war to make him famous. Why, that's history.

Paul: Yeah, generals too. They need war.

A Third Soldier: And manufacturers. They get rich. . . .

How Wars Should be Fought

Katzinsky: I'll tell ya how it should all be done. Whenever there's a big war comin' on, you should rope off a big field (and sell tickets). Yeah, and, and, on the big day, you should take all the kings and their cabinets and their generals, put them in the center dressed in their underpants and let 'em fight it out with clubs. The best country wins.

Further Resources

BOOKS

Eyman, Scott. *The Speed of Sound: Hollywood and the Talkie Revolution*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997.

Firda, Richard Arthur. "All Quiet on the Western Front": *Literary Analysis and Cultural Context*. New York: Twayne, 1993.

Remarque, Erich Maria. *The Road Back*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1931.

WEBSITES

"All Quiet on the Western Front." Blackwell Web Development & Design. Available online at <http://www.bwdd.com/allquiet> (accessed February 14, 2003).

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"Lewis Milestone." The Internet Movie Database. Available online at <http://us.imdb.com/Name?Milestone,+Lewis> (accessed February 14, 2003).

Early Sunday Morning

Painting

By: Edward Hopper

Date: 1930

Source: Hopper, Edward. *Early Sunday Morning*. 1930. In the collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art. Image number 109046.

About the Artist: Edward Hopper (1882–1967) is one of the best-known realist painters of the Depression era. Born in Nyack, New York, in 1882, Hopper studied with the renowned American realist Robert Henri and greatly admired the work of the Ashcan school of artists. He enjoyed significant success until abstract expressionism began to overtake realism in popularity. Except for regular summer trips to New England, Hopper confined himself to his New York studio for much of his life, dying there in 1967. ■

Introduction

Two branches of realist art emerged in the 1920s and 1930s in the United States. A reaction against the excesses of romanticism and classicism, they sought to represent realistic, everyday life.

One branch of realism was the American regionalist movement. It was characterized by artists painting rural American scenes. Grant Wood's famous 1930 painting, *American Gothic*, is perhaps the best-known example of this style. Other American regionalists included John Curry and Thomas Hart Benton who painted Plains-states landscapes and the plants and wildlife of rural America.

In contrast, the second branch of the realist movement, social realism, was more urban and sought to depict the social problems and hardships of everyday American life. Greatly influenced by Robert Henri and the Ashcan School, the artists of this movement included Jack Levine and Mexican muralist Diego Rivera.

Hopper's art combined elements of both the American regionalist and social realism movements and allowed him to form his own unique brand of realism—similar to yet very different from either branch. Because he lived and painted in his studio in New York City, his intimacy with city life often comes out in his work, but he had the unique ability to bring a rural feeling even to



Primary Source

Early Sunday Morning

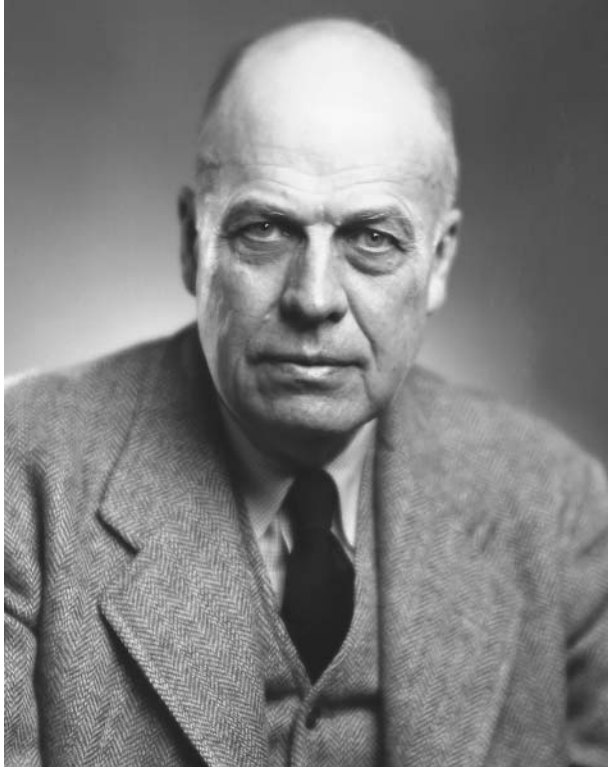
SYNOPSIS: Hopper's *Early Sunday Morning*, painted in 1930, is an example of his striking use of light to create an ethereal mood. The painting is stark and efficient and conveys a sense of desolation, yet the lighting softens these characteristics. This theme is common in many of Hopper's other works, including *New York Movie* and *Cape Cod Afternoon*. In this, as in many of his paintings of the American scene, no people are included. © WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.

scenes from the heart of the city. He stripped the city of its skyscrapers, bustling crowds, and fast-paced traffic and replaced them with quiet scenes of sparsely populated movie theaters, train stations, cafés, and apartment rooms. He also brought this solitude to his authentically rural scenes, created from a composite of his impressions during summer travels to New England, as seen in

Cape Cod Afternoon, *Lighthouse at Two Lights*, and *Monhegan Landscape*.

Significance

Although he was not exceedingly successful in his early years, Hopper had become well known by the 1930s, and his career was not significantly affected by



American painter Edward Hopper around 1940. Hopper is famous for his scenes of contemporary American life. © OSCAR WHITE/CORBIS. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.

the Depression. Major museums such as the Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art bought a number of his paintings. In 1933, Hopper's *Early Sunday Morning* became the Whitney's most expensive purchase to date. In the same year, a retrospective exhibition of his work was given at the Museum of Modern Art. Later, in 1950, the Whitney gave a similar retrospective.

Hopper's depiction of loneliness and isolation reflected the feelings of the Depression-era United States, when people felt caught between nostalgia for the frontier life of the past and excitement over the progress of industrialism and burgeoning city migration. Hopper's art mirrored the paradoxical tendency for people to be with other people and yet feel isolated. This may have been Hopper's commentary on the isolation and pace of modern life.

Hopper created over forty important works that can still be seen in many major art museums across the country. His paintings and etchings reflect the sense of loss Americans were feeling as the landscape of the United States changed during the 1920s and 1930s. His style in such paintings as the celebrated image of a gas station can be viewed as foreshadowing the later American pop art movement that included such artists as Andy Warhol. Although he found success in his career while he was

alive, his true impact has only been realized since his death.

Further Resources

BOOKS

Levin, Gail. *Edward Hopper: An Intimate Biography*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995.

Lucie-Smith, Edward. *Lives of the Great Twentieth Century Artists*. New York: Rizzoli, 1986.

Needham, Gerald. *Nineteenth-Century Realist Art*. New York: Harper & Row, 1988.

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"Edward Hopper." Mark Harden's Artchive. Available online at <http://www.artchive.com/artchive/H/hopper.html> (accessed February 14, 2003).

AUDIO AND VISUAL MEDIA

"Streamlines and Breadlines." Episode 6 of the PBS series *American Visions*. PBS Home Video, 1996. VHS.

Poetry of Langston Hughes

"Scottsboro"; "Ballad of Roosevelt"; "Let America Be America Again"

Poems

By: Langston Hughes

Date: 1932; 1934; 1936

Source: Hughes, Langston. *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes*. Edited by Arnold Rampersad. New York: Knopf, 1994, 234–237.

About the Author: Langston Hughes (1902–1967) was first published in a national magazine at age nineteen. Through his poetry, he became known as a major voice of the African American experience. Hughes often wrote about the plight of the oppressed, prejudice against African Americans, the American working class, or the struggle of peoples overseas. He traveled widely in the United States and abroad but considered Harlem his true home. Hughes died in a New York City hospital. ■

Introduction

The 1930s was a decade of great social unrest. Conditions were far from the American ideal, and Hughes' poetry expressed many of the injustices he saw in the American system. The Depression and the Roosevelt administration, with its New Deal programs, created the context for many of Hughes' works. Like those of other prominent writers of his time—Sinclair Lewis, John Steinbeck, Theodore Dreiser, and John Dos Passos, for example—Hughes' writings critically reflected the social