The Beats: A Very Short Introduction

David Sterritt

The Beats: A Very Short Introduction offers an overview of the social, cultural, and aesthetic sensibilities of the Beats, bringing out the similarities that connected them, and also the many differences. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the Beat Generation writers revolutionized American literature with their iconoclastic approach to language and their angry assault on the conformity and conservatism of postwar society. They and their followers took aim at the hypocrisy and taboos of their time. Members of the Beat Generation hoped to inspire others to purify their lives and souls, yet they urged the remaking of consciousness on a profoundly inward-looking basis. The idea was to revolutionize society by revolutionizing thought, not the other way around.

Colonial Latin American Literature: A Very Short Introduction

Rolena Adorno

Colonial Latin American Literature: A Very Short Introduction provides a vivid account of the literary culture of the Spanish-speaking Americas from the time of Columbus to Latin American Independence. This VSI explores the origins of Latin American literature in Spanish and tells the story of how Spanish literary language developed and flourished in the New World. The works of Spanish, creole, and Amerindian authors highlighted here, including Bartolomé de las Casas, Felipe Guaman Poma, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, and Andrés Bello, have been chosen for the merits of their writings, their participation in the larger literary and cultural debates of their times, and their resonance among readers today.

Native American Literature: A Very Short Introduction

Sean Teuton
Native American literature began over thirty thousand years ago when indigenous people started telling stories of emergence, creation, journey, quest, heroism, and trickery. By setting indigenous literature in historical moments, Native American Literature: A Very Short Introduction traces its evolution from the ancient role of bringing rain and healing the body, to its later purpose in resisting European invasion and colonization, into its current place as a world literature confronting dominance while celebrating the imagination and resilience of indigenous lives. This VSI describes the diversity of indigenous peoples who, owing to their differing lands, livelihoods, and customs, molded literature to a nation's specific needs.