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| Lindsay, Vachel (1879-1931) |
| **[Enter any *variant forms* of your headword – OPTIONAL]** |
| Vachel Lindsay was an American poet whose concern for developing a new, popular American language led him to become one of the first people to write a serious account of motion picture aesthetics. Born in Springfield, Illinois, Lindsay was pressured by his parents to become a doctor, but left Hiram College to study art in Chicago and New York. Encouraged to become a poet, he began wandering the country, reading and selling poetry in exchange for food, in the style of the medieval troubadours. Poems such as ‘General William Booth Enters Heaven’ and ‘The Congo,’ which offered a rustic and populist vision of democratic community and American national identity — as well as an exoticist vision of American ‘others’ — made him famous nationwide, but he was most noted for his energetic performances of his poetry, which emphasised their musical qualities. His background in art and his personal ties to Abraham Lincoln (who shared the same hometown) and American culture led him to seek out forms of communication that were clear, direct, and popular, which he found in hieroglyphics and the cinema. His typology of film genres — Action (to him, sculpture-in-motion), Intimacy (painting-in-motion), and Splendour (architecture-in-motion) — emphasised cinema not only as actively visual, but also as acting on the audience, making it a new machine for educating and reconfirming American community. |
| Vachel Lindsay was an American poet whose concern for developing a new, popular American language led him to become one of the first people to write a serious account of motion picture aesthetics. Born in Springfield, Illinois, Lindsay was pressured by his parents to become a doctor, but left Hiram College to study art in Chicago and New York. Encouraged to become a poet, he began wandering the country, reading and selling poetry in exchange for food, in the style of the medieval troubadours. Poems such as ‘General William Booth Enters Heaven’ and ‘The Congo,’ which offered a rustic and populist vision of democratic community and American national identity — as well as an exoticist vision of American ‘others’ — made him famous nationwide, but he was most noted for his energetic performances of his poetry, which emphasised their musical qualities. His background in art and his personal ties to Abraham Lincoln (who shared the same hometown) and American culture led him to seek out forms of communication that were clear, direct, and popular, which he found in hieroglyphics and the cinema. His typology of film genres — Action (to him, sculpture-in-motion), Intimacy (painting-in-motion), and Splendour (architecture-in-motion) — emphasised cinema not only as actively visual, but also as acting on the audience, making it a new machine for educating and reconfirming American community.  File: Vachel\_Lindsay\_1913.jpg  Figure 1: Vachel Lindsay (1913). Source URL: <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/9e/Nicholas_Vachel_Lindsay_1913.jpg> Paratextual Materials: Many of Lindsay’s works are now available online at Project Gutenberg or Hathi Trust:  [Project Gutenberg: Books by Lindsay, Vachel](http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/author/234)  [Hathi Trust Digital Library: Lindsay, Vachel](http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Search/Home?lookfor=%22Lindsay%2C%20Vachel%2C%201879-1931.%22&searchtype=author&ft=ft&setft=true) |
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