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Representation of the American Dream through the work of Norman Rockwell

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Norman Rockwell (born 1894, New Jersey) was not only a keen observer of the everyday reality of XXth century American life, he has also greatly contributed to shape the representation that Americans had (and still have) of themselves.

[http://lyc-george-sand-la-chatre.tice.ac-orleans-tours.fr/eva/sites/lyc-george-sand-la-chatre/local/cache-vignettes/L369xH260/rockwell_auto_portrait-4848a.jpg] **Norman Rockwell's self portrait, working on a Saturday Evening Post cover**

His most famous paintings in that respect are probably the Four Freedom series, which were published by the Saturday Evening Post during four consecutive weeks, and were a response to **President FD Roosevelt's 1941 State of the Union Speech**.

[http://lyc-george-sand-la-chatre.tice.ac-orleans-tours.fr/eva/sites/lyc-george-sand-la-chatre/local/cache-vignettes/L224xH282/freedom_worship-0b3b8.jpg] **Freedom of Worship**

[http://lyc-george-sand-la-chatre.tice.ac-orleans-tours.fr/eva/sites/lyc-george-sand-la-chatre/local/cache-vignettes/L262xH338/freedom_of_speech_-f4466.jpg] **Freedom of Speech**

[http://lyc-george-sand-la-chatre.tice.ac-orleans-tours.fr/eva/sites/lyc-george-sand-la-chatre/local/cache-vignettes/L262xH338/freedom_fear-d6a4d.jpg] **Freedom from Fear**

In this speech, FD defined the four fundamental freedoms that every nation should be able to enjoy : **Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Religion, Freedom from Want, Freedom from fear**. This speech, which can be considered as a precursor of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, has a universal appeal, but is also a clear reflection of American values, and of American exceptionalism (the theory according to which Americans are a special people with a special destiny to lead the world toward liberty and democracy)

Norman Rockwell's Four Freedoms were very popular, and were commonly displayed in post offices, schools, clubs, railroad stations, and a variety of public and semi-public. **Freedom from Want** is commonly referred to as "**Norman Rockwell's Thanksgiving**" :

[http://lyc-george-sand-la-chatre.tice.ac-orleans-tours.fr/eva/sites/lyc-george-sand-la-chatre/local/cache-vignettes/L286xH400/freedom_from_want-43-NR-63844.jpg] **Freedom from Want**

These pictures are probably the best example of how a popular artist has expressed a nation's sense of its own identity.