

When is a Story More than a Story?

Social Commentary

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By the end of today's lecture, you should be able to:

- Explain the transition from pre-industrial to industrial society;
- Describe the major effects of WWI on Western Society;
- Explain the factors leading to the Great Depression;
- Articulate the relationship between social commentary and society

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The industrial age



- Massive social upheaval
- Worker displacement
- Cities changing
- Migration / immigration

Textile Mill in Lancashire, England [http://encarta.msn.com/media\\_461547457/textile\\_mill\\_in\\_lancashire\\_england.html](http://encarta.msn.com/media_461547457/textile_mill_in_lancashire_england.html)

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## Social welfare

- Big industry, but...
  - What about the poor?
  - Women, children, and exclusionary laws



[http://encarta.msn.com/media\\_481547497\\_761577952\\_1\\_1/child\\_labor\\_in\\_textile\\_factory.html](http://encarta.msn.com/media_481547497_761577952_1_1/child_labor_in_textile_factory.html)

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## The Modern World and Social Criticism

- WWI (in a nutshell)
- Post-war problems
  1. \_\_\_\_\_ loses status as world power
  2. \_\_\_\_\_ & spiraling inflation
  3. Land decimated
  4. People disheartened



Fontaine Ravine, from the Battle of Verdun  
<http://www.gwpda.org/photos/location.htm>

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## Modern world cont'd.

- Big Business in the 1920s
  - Pro-business governments
  - Failure of Labor to make changes
    - UK – failure of general strikes



1000,000 workers were locked out during the 1926 General Strike.

"Britain: The 1926 General Strike"  
<http://www.socialistparty.net/pub/pages/socialist016may06/17.htm>

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### Factors leading to Great Depression



<http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/gallery/2008/apr/14/economics-photography?picture=335331158>

- War
- Capital
- US policies
  - Overproduction
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - Bitterness over international finance

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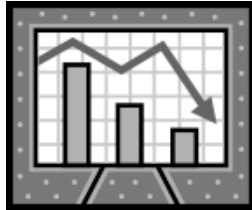
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### The Crash of the US Stock Market

- What goes up must come down
- Black Tuesday, October 29, 1929
- Panic Selling across the country
  - Recalling loans to Europe
  - Banks "lost" peoples' saving



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### So, what about the people?



Dust storm approaching Stratford, Texas. (Credit: NOAA Photo Library, Historic NWS collection)

- Unemployment and urban problems
  - Federal Relief?
  - Lost savings = no security
- Farmers
  - Overproducing
  - Tenant farmers
  - The Dust Bowl

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How to deal with this technological age of confusion?

- Withdrawing from society
- Writing fiction
- Social commentary (various forms)



<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/FWW/shellschoc.htm>

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### Concluding Comments / Introducing George Orwell



[http://img.dailymail.co.uk/i/pix/2007/09\\_01/georgeorwellDM0309\\_468x353.jpg](http://img.dailymail.co.uk/i/pix/2007/09_01/georgeorwellDM0309_468x353.jpg)

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