

Socio-Political Issues across Art Mediums

The **zeitgeist**--or, the general intellectual, moral, and cultural climate of an era--is reflected in its pop culture.

The following examples illustrate an issue across several artistic mediums. Let's take a look at several examples from the Great Depression- that illustrate the plight of the middle and lower classes, especially those employed in farming communities and rural areas or the mining and logging industries, which suffered the most.

The Great Depression was the worst economic downturn in the history of the industrialized world, lasting from 1929 to 1939. It began after the stock market crash of October 1929, which sent Wall Street into a panic and wiped out millions of investors. Over the next several years, consumer spending and investment dropped, causing steep declines in industrial output and employment as failing companies laid off workers. By 1933, when the Great Depression reached its lowest point, some 15 million Americans were unemployed and nearly half the country's banks had failed (<https://www.history.com/topics/great-depression/great-depression-history>).

Of Mice and Men is a 1937 **novella** by John Steinbeck. The work tells the story of George Milton & Lennie Small, two displaced migrant ranch workers, who move from place to place in California in search of new job opportunities during the Great Depression.

Steinbeck based the novella on his experiences working alongside migrant farm workers as a teenager in the 1910s. Steinbeck's characters are often powerless, due to intellectual, economic, & social circumstances. Economic powerlessness is established as many of the ranch hands are victims of the Great Depression.

(from: *Of Mice and Men*, Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)

"Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?" is one of the best-known American **songs** of the Great Depression.

It was considered by many Republicans to be anti-capitalist propaganda, and attempts were made to ban it from the radio. The song became best known, however, through recordings by Bing Crosby and Rudy Vallée – both of whom were themselves Republicans – that were released right before Franklin Delano Roosevelt's election to the presidency.

Ultimately, the song came to be viewed as an anthem to the shattered dreams of the era (from Wikipedia).

["Brother Can You Spare a Dime" Lyrics.pdf](#) 

Dorothea Lange (1895 – 1965) was an American documentary **photographer** and **photojournalist**, best known for her Depression-era work for the Farm Security Administration. Lange's photographs influenced the development of documentary photography and humanized the consequences of the Great Depression.

Other Examples of Socio-Political Issues across Art Mediums

MOVIES

<https://www.thoughtco.com/top-classic-films-with-social-message-3325203> (Links to an external site.)

<https://www.onlineuniversities.com/blog/2011/05/15-fantastic-films-for-teaching-social-justice/> (Links to an external site.)

DANCE

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2&v=3LzX36s_hcs

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yMxbrcNBCoM>

MUSIC

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M2mpE6Nwh2g>

ART

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jc1Nfx4c5LQ>