

Informative Essay Sample

The Great Gatsby and the Great War

The Great War, more commonly known as World War I, influences F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel in many important ways. The War directly causes Gatsby to lose his lover Daisy and is responsible for his Montenegro medal and significant "Oxford education".

World War I forced many young American men to leave their family to fight a war in unfamiliar European territory. Unexpectedly drafted into a conflict that they had little concern for, the War inexplicably altered the lives of millions of Americans. Faced with terrible conditions and unbridled inhumanity many soldiers returned home insane or permanently shocked from their war experiences. To add insult to injury, the government failed in its duty to assist veterans economically after they returned from the War. For Gatsby, World War I meant that he would have to leave his sweetheart Daisy behind while he fought overseas. Though they regularly sent letters to each other at first, Daisy eventually grows tired of waiting for Gatsby and marries Tom Buchanan; Gatsby literally loses Daisy to the War. When Gatsby returns he is extremely poor, barely surviving from day to day. He is forced to wear his military uniform for months after his return because he is unable to purchase civilian clothing. When offered lunch by Meyer Wolfshiem, Gatsby "ate more than four dollars' worth of food in half an hour" (179). Without money Gatsby could no longer attract Daisy like in his youth. Gatsby's sad story was echoed by an entire generation of American veterans.

When horrible images and nightmares of war haunted a soldier's dreams upon his return, one of the few things he could have pride about were his metals. Symbols of brave, courageous deeds, metals offered a soldier honors and welcome when he returned home. Many decorated soldiers were hailed as national heroes at first, but were quickly forgotten. In Gatsby's case, he fought bravely in a number of important battles and was promoted to the rank of "Major" earning honors from "every Allied nation". Of particular significance to Gatsby was the metal from "little Montenegro" which he carried with him throughout the story for good luck.

Upon their return, some lucky soldiers were offered opportunities for higher education. The U.S. government attempted to compensate soldiers for their time in service with higher education but fell short; hundreds of thousands of uneducated soldiers became

“bums” upon their return to the U.S. Gatsby was one of the soldiers fortunate enough to attend Oxford University. However, Gatsby’s stay was only five months long and was especially consequential because it was the final event that lost him Daisy.

After World War I, American society enjoyed unprecedented levels of prosperity and entered a period known as the Roaring 20s as the economy soared. However, for many American veterans the illusion of prosperity presented by the 1920s could not compensate for precious time lost forever to the War.



Papers of outstanding quality
without any payments beforehand

ORDER NOW