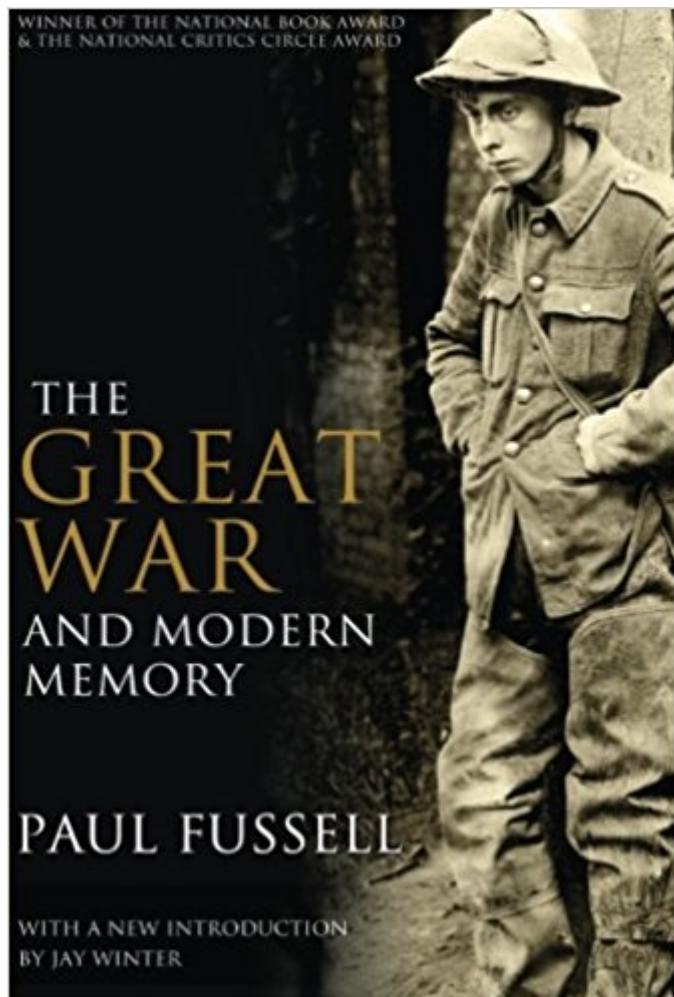


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# The Great War And Modern Memory



## Synopsis

Winner of both the National Book Award and the National Book Critics Circle Award and named by the Modern Library one of the twentieth century's 100 Best Non-Fiction Books, Paul Fussell's *The Great War and Modern Memory* was universally acclaimed on publication in 1970. Today, Fussell's landmark study remains as original and gripping as ever: a literate, literary, and unapologetic account of the Great War, the war that changed a generation, ushered in the modern era, and revolutionized how we see the world. This brilliant work illuminates the trauma and tragedy of modern warfare in fresh, revelatory ways. Exploring the work of Siegfried Sassoon, Robert Graves, Edmund Blunden, David Jones, Isaac Rosenberg, and Wilfred Owen, Fussell supplies contexts, both actual and literary, for those writers who--with conspicuous imaginative and artistic meaning--most effectively memorialized World War I as an historical experience. Dispensing with literary theory and elevated rhetoric, Fussell grounds literary texts in the mud and trenches of World War I and shows how these poems, diaries, novels, and letters reflected the massive changes--in every area, including language itself--brought about by the cataclysm of the Great War. For generations of readers, this work has represented and embodied a model of accessible scholarship, huge ambition, hard-minded research, and haunting detail. Restored and updated, this new edition includes an introduction by historian Jay Winter that takes into account the legacy and literary career of Paul Fussell, who died in May 2012.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"One of the best nonfiction works I've ever read. I'm a huge fan of virtually everything Fussell has ever done, but this unique book, which uses literature and social history to examine World War I, may be his best. Unflinching." --James Gray, *The Week* "Literary and historical materials, in themselves not unfamiliar, are brought together in a probing, sympathetic, and finally illuminating fashion. It is difficult to think of a scholarly work in recent years that has more deeply engaged the reader at both the intellectual and emotional level." --*The New Republic* "Skillful, compassionate.... An important contribution to our understanding of how we came to make World War I part of our minds." --Frank Kermode, *The New York Times Book Review* "A learned book that is also bright and sensitive." --*The New Yorker* "An original and brilliant piece of cultural history and one of the most deeply moving books I have read in a long time." --Lionel Trilling "Paul Fussell's *The Great War and Modern Memory* introduced an entirely new and creative way of writing both about war and the literature it generates. It has been a profound influence on historians and literary critics alike." --John Kegan

Paul Fussell was an American cultural and literary historian and critic. He is the author of over 20 works and winner of the National Book Award and National Book Critics Circle Award.

I purchased his book after reading through my great-grandfather's WWI diary for a better understanding of the war itself from the perspective of the average foot soldier. The book is composed mainly of poetry, biography, and reviews of the war as they appear in popular culture. Despite not being a poetry enthusiast, I enjoyed the literature even when presented in a very academic form. It expresses the vivid details of trench warfare that are often overlooked in films and novels. While not an exciting read, it is very engrossing and informative.

Paul Fussell's book provides a different, compelling lens on World War I, combining Fussell's personal experience in the war, his literary scholarship as a teacher (Northrop Frye's levels of meaning), and the poetry that emerged from World War I. I strongly recommend the Illustrated Edition, an edition published 30 plus years after the original edition. In the Illustrated Edition, one finds posters, cartoons, photographs---all adding to gripping story in the original text.

Detailed, thought-provoking work. Not focused on battle details but on the influence of prior literature and the horrible trench warfare on literature arising thereafter. A very detailed analysis with excellent bibliography for further reading. Written from a modernist perspective, therefore somewhat

controversial.

Professor Fussell's "The Great War and Modern Memory" is one of the great books on the intersection of war and literature. It's a review of the impact that the trench warfare of WW1 had on a generation of poets and how that also entered the language and imagery of Western Culture. He brings to bear not only a formidable intelligence, but the experience of having been a front line soldier in WW2. That makes all the difference.

Good short history of WW 1

Still reading this giant book and feel inspired by its insights. The theme of this work seems right on target: The Great War still directs man's drive to provoke a perpetual war Mentality and motivate deadly serial conflicts to resolve philosophical disagreements between nation states.

This compelling combination of literature and war history, gracefully told, is one of the best books of its kind. It was a pleasure to be reminded of the great writing that came out of the horrors of World War I, heartbreaking to see how the thoughtless egotism of leaders, political and military, sacrificed innocent lives. Highly recommended. Twentieth-century cynicism was born here.

A terrific study; I remember first looking at this shortly after graduating from college some decades ago. Re-reading it now I think I appreciate more Fusell. It is very much from the point of view of the Brits. I recommend having a good collection of the poets cited to read the whole of the works (one could be ambitious and have the novels, memoirs, and letters available as well--I was not so inclined).

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