

The continue their
fight for equality and



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The Roaring Twenties represent a significant period of deep political, economic and social changes in American history. In 1917, America got involved in the First World War and young men were forced to join the military forces to take part in it. Eventually, the impact of the war benefited the country and its prosperity began to bloom. During this decade, great improvements in the area of industry and technology contributed to notable inventions like the automobile or the telephone, leading to a boost of advertising and consumerism (Tredell 2007, 9).

In order that Americans could buy these new goods, loans to be paid off in the form of instalments were provided (11). Besides, women began to acquire more visibility in the society and made the most of it trying to free themselves from men's chains (Freedman 1974, 375). What were the changes women faced in order to obtain this visibility and did they really fulfill women's expectations? The aim of this paper is to identify these shifts and to analyze whether they affected women positively or negatively.

Drawing on Baz Luhrmann's *The Great Gatsby* (2013), this paper will begin revealing two major achievements which, to some extent, encouraged women to continue their fight for equality and will then move on to examine the emergence of the flapper, characterized by her clothes and dancing.

Finally, a justification of how women were still objectified after all will be provided as well, taking the three main female characters in the film as an example. At the time, women gained a considerable amount of political and economical power, for what they were considered to have achieved social and economical equality to men for the first time in history (Freedman 1974, 373). Traditionally, a woman's duty was to stay at home, playing the role of

the loving and caring mother and wife, she was to be an example of “ piety, purity, domesticity and, submissiveness” (Prigozy 2008, 144). The First World War gave women the opportunity to obtain a job and the female labour force in industrial employments increased.

The American society, consequently, began to adapt to those female workers (Freedman 1974, 380-381). Myrtle Wilson, Tom Buchanan’s lover, is a working-class woman married to a poor mechanic. As one day Tom visits them at their garage in the Great Valley of the Ashes, a visibly much more poor area, Myrtle comes downstairs stating that if he has some business, he shall talk to her (Luhmann 2013, 00: 16: 08).

She is a working woman, and not only this; the scene denotes, somehow, her superiority in comparison to her husband as he is only a repairman and she is the one in charge of the whole business, convincing the audience that a woman is capable of occupying jobs that take some responsibility. However, generally, “ men worked with men and women with women” (Chafe 1991, 73). Those women applying for a job ended up taking what was called a “ women’s work”, such as teaching or nursing (73). Through the incorporation of females in the labour market, although in a “ restricted” way, a change, representative of a step towards economical equality between women and men, is noticeable.