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Abstract

Despite the continued prominence of First World War studies, and the current debate about the importance of the Great War to the development of Modernism, there has been scant recognition of Black literary responses to World War I. Yet it is acknowledged that the Great War was crucial to the emergence of “the New Negro” and the Harlem Renaissance. This article examines two Great War plays by African American women which foreground the political issues raised by African American conscription to fight in France during World War I. It argues that there was a distinct *womanist* response to atrocities (in Europe and USA) and that these propaganda plays, by early

Harlem Renaissance writers “ Dunbar-Nelson and Burrill ” were part of an important womanist cultural strategy to lead changes in American society via education and women's networks.



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