

Mary Hunter Austin

A Female Writer's Protest Against the First World War in the United States

SERIES IN AMERICAN HISTORY

About the author

Jowan A. Mohammed holds an MA from Nord University, Norway and is currently undertaking doctoral research on New York's radical, female milieu during the First World War. Her main research interests are women's history, gender studies, and world literature. Her interest in Mary Hunter Austin began during a graduate course, in which she became fascinated by the power and endurance that she, and women like her, invested to make the world a better and more equal place.

"Memory is not history, Jowan A. Mohammed insists in her 'Mary Hunter Austin: A Female Writer's Protest Against the First World War in the United States', and Mary Hunter Austin, while a fierce believer in women's independence and civic responsibility, was not a feminist; instead, she was made so by later feminists for whom the construction of a feminist history included space for Austin Hunter's regionalist, naturalist, overtly political writings. Where history had erased her voice, her-story renditions of the 20th century women's suffrage movement brought her – back, they felt – into the story. In this way, Mohammed's book is both an exploration of the legacy of an extraordinary chronicler of life in the early 20th century American West, but also a contribution to the study of collective memory studies, to feminist historiographical studies, and more broadly to history itself.

Best known for 'The Land of Little Rain' (1903), Hunter Austin was a novelist, poet, essayist, journalist, and eventual memoirist, as well as a climate and anti-war activist who championed the rights of women. Mohammed focuses, here, on Hunter Austin's WWI-era work as well as its contemporaneous reception, in order to understand the ways in which later feminists made use of these works and of Hunter Austin's legacy to create a foundational origin story to which WWI-era suffrage debates were critical."

Dr. Rashi Rohatgi
Nord universitet, Norway

Summary

Mary Hunter Austin (1868-1934) is often referred to as an important American writer of the early decades of the 20th century, with much of her work concerning nature and Native American culture. Hunter Austin was also considered to be one of the early feminist writers, whose works had an impact on the redefinition of gender roles during the First World War.

This study examines the feminist perception of her later years, connecting feminist history to questions related to memory through a study of literature, politics, and interpretations of the past (both feminist and gendered). It demonstrates how far the perception and remembrance of the past are determined by later agendas and considerations. This work is an insightful and detailed study, meant to expand knowledge within the field of collective memory about Mary Hunter Austin's life and work alike.

This book is intended for those with a general interest in feminism, socialism, World War One and gender issues. Academics and specialists in the field will value new research on a crucial figure in American literary history.

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SUBJECTS Feminism, Literary Analysis, History

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