
What do we see in Cuba?: Eva Canel and the Hispanophone Perspective

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Abstract

The travel writer Eva Canel (1857-1932) was born in Spain but was also a resident in the United States, Cuba, and various South American cities for most of her life. Widowed while still young, Canel supported herself and her son as a professional travel writer. In this paper, I analyze Canel's self-representation as both an American and Spanish woman with cultural and affective ties to women in Cuba of multiple and often competing identities. In particular, I consider how her carefully cultivated transnational identity as a Spanish woman but American writer inflected her account of the Spanish-American War of 1898. Eva Canel wrote of the intersection of private life and the political and I argue that her interventions shaped Hispanism, seen here as an American phenomenon built of Spanish neo-imperialism. In the second decade of the twentieth century, Canel published *Lo que vi en Cuba* [What I saw in Cuba] as an itinerant Spanish-American attempting to define the threshold between America and Spain in the contested space of Cuba.

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