
Gender, emotion and exile: Evelyn Scott in deep Brazil

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Abstract

The American writer Evelyn Scott (née Elsie Dunn) eloped with Cyril Kay-Scott (née Frederick Creighton Wellman) in 1912. At the time she was a southern upper class young woman. He, also from a southern prominent family, was a physician, married, father of four, and more than twice her senior. Without passports and carrying very little money they fled to Brazil where they eventually made their way to the backlands of Bahia to create a sheep farm in secluded Cercadinho, which is referred here as deep Brazil. In Cercadinho the couple faced extreme poverty and starvation. The experience was particularly painful for Evelyn Scott. Being a young woman, pregnant, foreigner, and not knowing a word of the local language, the hardship of adaptation in Brazil especially in Cercadinho proved to be extreme. While Cyril Kay-Scott as a provider man who mastered the new language could easily occupy different layers of the public sphere, Evelyn was most of the time confined to a domestic space where she felt despised by the local women, who looked upon her with hostility, as well as the men, who pursued her with "cloying looks". This work aims to explore aspects of gender and emotion associated with Evelyn Scott's process of adaptation in her Brazilian self-imposed exile. The analysis is based on her autobiographical novel *Escapade* whose account reveal important aspects related to her view of both the American society left behind and the Brazilian society that would surround them in the future. Regarding the theoretical framework, I approach the concepts of gender, memory, and emotion as historically situated discourses shaped by the culture and society within which they are produced.

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