

and historians with an important framework for recording the testimonies of women in political conflicts. The text provides a thorough historical and cultural background necessary to understand both the conflicts, their previous archives, and the fundamental need to fill in the gaps. For Latin American scholars, it is a crucial text in understanding the conflict.

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**Soria, Mar. *Geographies of Urban Female Labor and Nationhood in Spanish Culture, 1880-1975*. U of Nebraska P, 2020. 334 pp.**

Mar Soria's *Geographies of Urban Female Labor and Nationhood in Spanish Culture (1880-1975)* offers an innovative examination of how working women in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Spain experienced and interpreted urban spaces. This is the first academic monograph to examine female labor primarily within the realm of Spanish cultural production, including literary, cinematic, and performative texts. While previous studies on Spanish women's entrance and increasing presence in the public labor economy have been grounded in historiography or sociology, Soria's *Geographies* privileges representations of female labor in cultural artifacts, which are valued as sites through which power is negotiated (11). The diversity of literary and cultural texts analyzed—from 19<sup>th</sup>-century *zarzuelas* and realist narratives to 20<sup>th</sup>-century avant-garde novels, journalism, and film—is one of this book's greatest strengths. This focus on women's representation within the "symbolic realm of discourse" offers a fresh examination of working women's experiences in urban spaces and their potential to both "contest and reinforce hegemonic discourses of class, gender, and space" (10). In opposition to the dominant discourse celebrating the wholly domestic, middle-class ideal of the *ángel del hogar*, the urban working woman was undomesticated, public, and viewed suspiciously as (sexually) uncontrollable and hazardous to both Spanish womanhood and national identity (3-4). According to Soria, this urban working woman—a marginal Other or "deviant from the conventional ideal of femininity"—was either excluded from nation-building projects or, somewhat paradoxically, incorporated into them by way of a deliberate (re)fashioning of their identity as traditionally or authentically Spanish in the face of a threatening modernity (10).

Soria's Introduction, "Dismantling the Myth of Female Domesticity," describes her goal as constructing a "feminist geography of urban female labor" (rather than a cartography of geographical city spaces) (9). To achieve this, *Geographies* focuses on gender and class within concrete and abstract spaces—the body, the home, the workspace, the city, the nation—where "meaning and power are constituted" (10). The book's six chapters explore these sites chronologically through literary and aesthetic tendencies. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, Chapter 1, "The Castiza Working Woman: *Regeneracionismo* in Género Chico," analyzes portrayals of female cigar factory workers, flower vendors, and *cupletistas*, or risqué song performers in three *zarzuelas*: *Las cigarerras* (1887), by Ángel Munilla and Luis Ferreiro;

*La suerte de Isabelita* (1911), by María de la O Lejárraga (María [Gregorio] Martínez Sierra); and *Los de Aragón* (1927) by Juan José Lorente. In each performance piece, the idealized urban working-class woman is not only a “good patriot” who “defends the space she considers her nation from foreign incursions” (66), but she embodies an “authentic Spanishness” that is key to the *zarzuelas*’ middle-class nationalist project (37). Of note is Soria’s reading of the *cigarrera*, whose patriotic reconfiguration in these fictional representations directly contradicts their historical lived experiences as politically active demonstrators who changed wage labor for women (38). Soria reminds readers that, while the *zarzuela-cigarrera* is fictional, her *castiza* portrayal can be read as an incarnation of “bourgeois anxieties about modernization” (38).

Chapter 2, “Homebound Workers: The Reconfiguration of Bourgeois Domestic Space in Realism,” centers on depictions of maids, arguing that servants’ labor blurred the boundaries between the public and private spheres and challenged the construction of the home as a site of leisure and passive domesticity. Reading Benito Pérez Galdós’s *Tormento* (1884) and two *cuentos* by Emilia Pardo Bazán, “Casi artista” and “El mundo” (1908), Soria reconfigures the home as a site of remunerated female labor and economic production. These homes become permeable spaces in which economic exchange and female labor intersect in ways that undermine the separate spheres ideology dependent on hermetic domestic spaces free of capitalist transactions. Soria credits Bazán’s narrative structures, which feature reliable and sympathetic voices, with ultimately defending female entrepreneurs, or “self-made women” (85). Moving to the twentieth century, Chapter 3, “Commodifying the Nation: The Story and the Shopgirl in Avant-Garde Literature,” examines working women exclusively outside the domestic sphere. This chapter juxtaposes shopgirls from two aesthetically and ideologically distinct novels: Carmen de Burgos’s *La rampa* (1917) and Ramón Gómez de la Serna’s *La nardo* (1930). Soria locates commonalities in these Madrid-based narratives that portray the downfall of a shopgirl-protagonist resulting from her desire to escape urban labor’s drudgery through consumerism and bodily pleasure. Soria’s reading of Burgos’s *La rampa* identifies inconsistencies, as the narrator condemns the bourgeoisie while maintaining class prejudices that denigrate female servants and weaken the novel’s feminist message (121-22). In *La nardo*, a decidedly “masculinist representation” of the shopgirl sarcastically critiques “the artificial, degenerate, and shifting nature of modern consumer culture that corrupts the Spanish essence” (125-26). Gómez de la Serna’s shopgirl excessively consumes mass-produced romance novellas and low culture, suggesting an uncontrolled female sexual desire that accelerates her ruin. Both novels suggest a parallel degeneration of Spanish womanhood and Spanish national identity.

Chapter 4, “Working for Change during the Second Republic: A New Woman for the Nation in Conservative and Left-Wing Literature,” features narratives by historically overlooked women writers. The 1934 avant-garde novel *Tea Rooms: Mujeres obreras*, by communist Luisa Carnés, shares similarities with Burgos’s *La rampa* in denouncing the exploitation of working women. Stylistically, Soria emphasizes Carnés’s ability to capture the highly sensorial and fragmented nature of urban life through a “cinematic narration” (146-

50), while also incorporating profane, working-class language that ruptures literary norms and traditional beliefs about women's writing and behavior (152). *Cristina Guzmán, profesora de idiomas* is a 1935 romance novel-inspired tale by Carmen de Icaza, an upper-class, regional leader of the Sección Femenina. Although little has been written on female fascists who commented on class, Soria shows that they contributed greatly to the discourse of their day (157). Militant women in the Sección Femenina represent a fascinating paradox, as they "had to become active outside the domestic realm precisely so as to defend and save what was perceived as their natural habitat, the home, from the ills brought about by the Republican political reforms" (159). In *Cristina Guzmán*, the fashionable protagonist is a model of Spanish femininity, and her jobs as a language teacher and a nurse reflect her class anxieties towards working women and those their labor served. Despite Carnés' and Icaza's opposing perspectives, Soria argues that both present a similar new paradigm of Spanish womanhood: a self-assured, independent, modern worker "who feels at ease in the urban geography" (143).

Chapter 5, "Back Home? Counterdiscourses of Female Labor and Nationhood in Postwar Women's Short Fiction," delves into the 1950 novella *Yo he sido estraperlista* by Ángeles Villarta, and two short stories by Carmen Martín Gaité, "La oficina" and "Los informes" (1954). Martín Gaité's narratives critique the increasingly factory-like office, particularly for its hierarchical divisions and increasingly alienated labor that mirror the city's processes as Spain's capitalist center. Villarta's *Yo he sido estraperlista* offers an intriguing critique of the black market, focusing on a common illegal female job after the war: selling and trading food. Through a humorous first-person narrator-protagonist, a "female rascal" (177), Villarta makes use of the Spanish picaresque and *costumbrista* traditions to express a critical social commentary. For Soria, the ironic narration reveals overlooked issues within the postwar government's official economic discourse. For example, women were not merely patriotic angels of the home, and many labored in public, traditionally male jobs (189). Likewise, women who occupied peripheral spaces were in fact central contributors to the (underground) economy (190). Chapter 6 plays on the mid-century slogan of Spanish difference. "Spanish Women Are Different: Cinematic Anxieties of Female Work in Late Francoism" examines three cinematic features: *Peppermint frappé* (Carlos Saura, 1967); *Las que tienen que servir* (Jose María Forque, 1967); and *Españolas en París* (Roberto Bodegas, 1971). In each film, the female worker's body becomes a battleground upon which the conflict of traditional Spanish values and foreign modernity is negotiated (212). Traditional Spanishness, with its religiosity and *castiza* identity, is challenged by liberal capitalism, technology, and consumerism, especially by a foreign Other that promotes undesirable modernity (221). Soria's commentary on *Españolas'* portrayal of abortion and motherhood (228-30) is especially insightful in this regard.

The Epilogue, "The Story is Not Over," concludes with a call for scholars to continue exploring representations of female labor in the cultural production of Spain's democratic period and the twenty-first century. It also synthesizes common themes across the previous chapters, thus revealing similar dynamics between female work, national identity, and the

urban economy that have emerged steadily, and repeatedly, over the century covered by this study. *Geographies* is an exceptional blending of literary analysis and cultural studies that re-examines (often invisible) urban women's labor and challenges traditional gendering of city spaces. Soria's writing style and her consistent focus women's experiences of urban labor (space and class) in fiction makes *Geographies* accessible and appropriate for undergraduate or graduate literature or cultural studies seminars. In terms of limitations, readers must be careful not to conflate fictional representations with historical events or Spanish women's actual lived experiences. Soria is skilled, however, at contextualizing her analyses of cultural constructions such that they do not purport to reflect historical circumstances, but rather offer additional layers of context that will enrich readers' understanding of the complexities of Spanish history and culture. Overall, *Geographies of Urban Female Labor and Nationhood in Spanish Culture (1880-1975)* is an essential resource for scholars examining women's labor within Spanish literature, culture, or history, or within urban studies and feminism in the Hispanic world.

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