Radost Rangelova

Gendered Geographies in Puerto Rican Culture: Spaces, Sexualities, Solidarities.

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Elegantly written, thoroughly researched, and well grounded in Puerto Rican political and sociohistorical life, Radost Rangelova's subtle study concentrates on the family house, the factory, the beauty salon, and the brothel in order to explore "the ways gendered spaces are constructed from feminine labor and capital in Puerto Rican literature and film (1950–2010)" (p. 11). Rangelova is thoroughly conversant with Puerto Rican culture in its many forms and sustains her arguments with substantial backing from contemporary cultural theories. The book samples a variety of cultural products by authors and film directors such as Rosario Ferré, Carmen Lugo Filippi, Magali García Ramis, Mayra Santos-Febres, Sonia Fritz, and Ana María García, among others.

Gendered Geographies proves how much feminist geography has grown since 1984 when the ground-breaking study *Geography and Gender* was published by the Women and Geography Study Group of the Institute of British Geographers. Rangelova's analysis broadens the scope of the field to the Caribbean and Latin America. Multiple forms of identity intersect in the works examined and she makes an original contribution, contesting and challenging concepts of nation and gender that lie at the heart of the traditional consumption and interpretation of Puerto Rican culture. She looks at both the cultural and socio-historical context of Puerto Rico and the Caribbean, mapping out the relationship between women's work, agency, and the nation, exploring the gendering and queering of Puerto Rican national and transnational identity in a variety of transformational literary and filmic works.

The introduction details how the history of Puerto Rico, particularly the Estado Libre Asociado, relies on discourses centering on the concept of *la gran familia puertorriqueña*, one of the most widely-recognized tropes of national unity. As Rangelova shows, the traditional allegory of the nation has come at the expense of women and minorities. She explores the way "spaces are understood not as static, but as flexible, malleable, and always in transformation" (p. 38), drawing on material from the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries.

Chapter 2 addresses the cultural nationalist project in texts that focus on exploitation of labor in women-centered spaces such as the cigar-making factory and the needlework workshop. The intersection of class and gender is laid bare through the emergence of Puerto Rican feminism, which Rangelova traces back to the nineteenth century. Anarchist writer Luisa Capetillo imagined alternative communities by rejecting traditional models of nation and family, and proposing instead desire as an alternative bond. Capetillo's transna-

tional exploration of the factory, the public forum, the home, and the page leads to a philosophy of labor and women's rights that aims for "her own notion of an ideal society" (p. 63). This chapter also looks at Sonia Fritz, José Artemio Torres, and Ana María García, whose films build on Capetillo's work as they represent the problematic space of the factory.

Chapter 3 discusses novels and films that subvert the paternalistic trope of the house as a model of the nation. José Luis González appears as a forerunner in challenging populist representations of Puerto Rican culture. Later, mostly skeptical, models of interpretation go beyond class- and race-based analyses to postmodern perspectives. Other works "rethink common representations of the intersections between domesticity, gender and sexuality" (p. 85). Rangelova examines literary and cinematic works by Rosario Ferré, Jacobo Morales, Oscar Orzábal Quintana, Magali García Ramis, and Paco López, some reaffirming and some subversive, which reinterpret spaces such as the street, the neighborhood, and the house.

Chapter 4 explores the significance of the beauty salon as a space that contests traditional ideas about gender and race in works by Carmen Lugo Filippi, Mayra Santos Febres, and Sonia Fritz. The beauty salon "enables a critical analysis of the negotiations of race, and of its intersections with other axes of identity" (p. 124). The works studied focus on the beauty salon as a space that mixes, constructs, and critiques matters of citizenship, gender, domestic violence, and consumption—all parts of the larger issue of the gendered geography of the nation.

Chapter 5 focuses on representations of the brothel as a matrix of power, oppression, and resistance on the margins of society, especially in works of fiction by Luis Rafael Sánchez, Rosario Ferré, Manuel Ramos Otero, Efraín López Neris, and Mayra Santos Febres.

Gendered Geographies considers a range of questions, critiques, and challenges about the discursive construction of the Puerto Rican nation, drawing on an ample selection of texts. Rangelova's readings will allow readers to go beyond national symbols and meanings structured by traditional dichotomous thinking so that the boundaries between home, work, and nation become a more fluid conceptual framework.

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