



Cultural Roundabouts: Spanish Film and Novel on the Road

Jorge Pérez

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Cultural Roundabouts: Spanish Film and Novel on the Road, by Jorge Pérez, offers the first comprehensive inquiry about the road genre in Spain. Road narratives have recently received some scholarly attention within the field of Peninsular Studies through a few articles and book chapters, but no book-length study has been published so far. This book investigates how Spanish authors such as Ignacio Martínez de Pisón, Ray Loriga, Eugenio Fuentes, and Eugenia Rico, and filmmakers such as Juan Antonio Bardem, Cecilia Bartolomé, Fernando Guillén Cuervo, and Mariano Barroso employ the road genre to address the reconfiguration of the social, economic, and cultural landscape of Spain since 1975. One of the premises of this book is that, in the context of Spanish culture, road movies and novels should be discussed concurrently, as they emerge as a response to the same socio-historical circumstances, share many thematic and iconographic traits, and show reciprocal influences. The road genre, broadly defined as movies and novels in which the characters travel by driving a vehicle across, out of, or into the Spanish territory, offers the opportunity to examine a country in movement and, thus, to reflect on the topic of national mobility. This genre brings to the fore the modernization of Spain, as highlighted by the remodeled highway system, the development of the automobile industry, and the changes in the landscape.

In this study, Pérez argues that road stories offer lenses through which one can observe contemporary Spain and its transformations, but also the shortcomings of its development. It is not a one-way journey of a whole community progressing at the same speed and along the same path. As the trope of the roundabout suggests, contemporary Spain seems to function with a fluid social and cultural circulation that allows movement from and to multiple directions. Yet, as with a roundabout in which specific traffic norms and hierarchies navigate flow, these narratives signal

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