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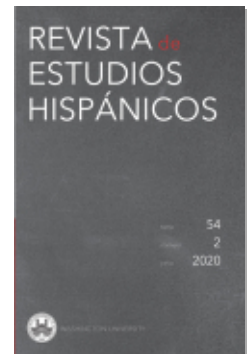
*Escribir desde el océano: la navegación de Hernando de Alarcón y otras retóricas del andar por el Nuevo Mundo* by Jimena N. Rodríguez (review)

Luis Alfonso Rodríguez-Rincón

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estudio inmanente de la crítica literaria latinoamericana; es decir, en mi opinión lo que le confiere originalidad a este estudio es que se enfoca en la dinámica interior que existe dentro del campo de la crítica literaria latinoamericana. Especialmente en la parte final del libro, Pistacchio trata de entender la lógica con la que se desarrolla esta tradición y el conflicto que se crea por lo que ella denomina la “aporía descolonial”—el deseo del discurso latinoamericano por establecer su diferencia y autonomía, pero su incapacidad para liberarse de las “huellas indelebles” que la condición colonial y de dependencia ha dejado—que forma parte intrínseca de esa lógica inmanente. Sólo desde esta perspectiva inmanente se entiende cómo Cornejo Polar y Rama podían justificar su tarea crítica; solo mirado desde este punto de vista, se puede analizar cómo cada nueva etapa de la trayectoria intelectual de Rama y Cornejo Polar nace de las condiciones creada por la etapa anterior. En ese sentido, el trabajo de Pistacchio me parece no sólo refrescante, sino necesario.

José Eduardo González

University of Nebraska

**Rodríguez, Jimena N. *Escribir desde el océano: la navegación de Hernando de Alarcón y otras retóricas del andar por el Nuevo Mundo. Iberoamericana – Veruert, 2018. 187 pp.***

Ships leave traces, however ephemeral, on the waters they traverse and, on the texts produced by the individuals they transport. Because of its Protean material reality—“es un espacio líquido, inmaterial, anónimo, de contornos y fuerzas inestables”—it is a challenge for scholars to gauge the impact of the ocean and the experience of sailing on the writings of any period (Rodríguez 52). This is certainly the case with the texts relating to the history of the early Americas. Jimena N. Rodríguez’s recent publication overcomes this challenge by assessing ships as a rhetorical place of enunciation impacting the earliest colonial discourses on the peoples and coasts of the Californias.

Her book is a hybrid composed of two parts. The centerpiece is a new critical edition and translation into Spanish of the report by Hernando de Alarcón describing his travels through the Gulf of California and up the Colorado River in 1540. This important early account of the Californias and its Indigenous peoples survived only in Italian as part of Giovanni Battista Ramusio’s *Navigazioni et viaggi* (1556), hence the need for a translation back into Spanish. Alongside this new translation by Celia Filipetto is an important theoretical study by Rodríguez that outlines the impact of the medium of travel (overland versus ship-bound) on the written discourses produced by the first explorers and colonizers in the Americas.

The focus of Rodríguez’s study is on the process by which first-hand experiences of new lands and peoples become discourse; in other words, as experiences become words constituting maps both physical and mental of distant shores: “El navegante atraviesa y organiza el espacio americano, lo clasifica, disecciona y fija, lo convierte en un ‘mapa de palabras’ desde el mundo abreviado del barco y el tiempo muerto del mar” (40). Much like the islands of the Caribbean, the lands that today

constitute Alta and Baja California were first named and observed from the particular vantage point of a ship's deck. How did the medium of exploration, sailing, constitute the discursive reality of the Californias in the early modern period? Rodríguez answers this question by outlining the rhetoric of the ship-bound observer.

The ship, for Rodríguez, is "un lugar de enunciación," a liminal and ever-changing observation platform that permits information to be gathered without the need for physical contact with the coasts and peoples being observed (19, 34). Time rather than place structures the discursive order of texts produced by ship-bound observers since, "las coordenadas espacio-temporales configuran el desplazamiento progresivo, generando así la representación de un mundo recorrido progresivo" (41). Overland expeditions, she argues by contrast, are narrated from the perspective of the scars left on the body by the journey (86). The physical challenges of traversing space overland and the dangers of intimate encounters with Indigenous peoples produce a markedly different sort of discourse from the removed observational mode of the ship (38).

As an ever-changing observation platform, "el barco como prolongación del imperio español" demonstrates not only the reach and power of the early modern colonial state but also its precarity (20). The recurring threat of shipwreck haunted overseas expeditions, and this was certainly the case in the challenging waters of the Gulf of California. This danger appears in Alarcón's account of navigating the mouth of the Colorado River when, at one point, "nos encontramos con las tres naves varadas en la arena, de manera que uno no podía socorrer al otro" (132). Alarcón only avoids the tragic fate of the prior 1532 expedition of Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, which sailed across the Gulf of California only to never return to Mexico, thanks to the tide which lifted his vessels and permitted them to continue their voyage (29). The fate of the ship is so closely bound to its passengers that they merge together to constitute a single body (28). This metonymic relationship helps explain both the vulnerability felt by sailors traversing unknown waters at the mercy of the elements threatening their ships, but also accounts for their privileged vantage point as removed and mobile observers of events on shore.

The ship as a point of enunciation impacted the tenor of ethnographic information produced by the ship-bound observer: "el punto de vista de un observador que se mantiene en movimiento y a la distancia" (122). In general, the product of this particular vantage point is a conception of the native peoples of distant shores as, "seres en un estado primigenio, en donde hombres y mujeres se 'con-funden' con la naturaleza" (69–70). Nevertheless, Alarcón's interest in the Yuma-speaking peoples living along the shore of the Colorado River evidences an engagement with the Indigenous Other that does not quite fit with the schema proposed by Rodríguez. Alarcón describes taking great pains to avoid any violence between his forces and the natives that gathered in great numbers to observe the Spanish. In one telling instance, he claims to have left the safety of his boat to walk among the natives in order to avoid violence: "decidí bajar a tierra para tranquilizarlos más, y para tranquilizarme a mí les indiqué por señas que se sentaran en el suelo" (135). This willingness to abandon the safety of the ship-as-observation-platform

and walk among the gathered natives produces a more nuanced ethnographic account. While, for Rodríguez, the ship-bound observer is essentially always a distant spectator to events on shore, Alarcón's coming to shore marks a shift towards a more direct engagement with the inhabitants of the Colorado River that manifests itself in a new attention to the tactile and auditory senses in his account: "yo me acerqué a ellos y los abracé . . . encomendando a mi intérprete que les hablase . . . y para saber qué tipo de comida tenían, les mostré mediante señas que teníamos ganas de comer" (135). As he feels the embrace of native peoples and attempts to reconcile their otherness through material exchange and dialogue, they come into sharper focus in his discourse. It is precisely the richness of Alarcón's ethnographic information that makes his account so important. This richness comes about in part thanks to Alarcón abandoning, if only briefly, the privileged vantage point of the ship-bound observer. Scholars must not ignore the ship-bounded situatedness of the observer that Rodríguez so convincingly describes, but they should not essentialize an observer or text based on their underlying mode of transportation. What Alarcón's account reveals is the way these opposing rhetorical vantage points overlapped in ways that makes clear the need for a less binary framework of rhetorical analysis.

While not the first translation back into Spanish of Alarcón's voyage, this new edition does complement and even surpass the 2004 translation edited by Julio César Montané Martí. What the new edition lacks are the transcriptions of key historical documents, such as the written instructions given by the Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza to Alarcón, included in the 2006 edition that help to contextualize the voyage in the political and social environment of sixteenth-century Mexico. As a whole, Rodríguez's new critical edition alongside her introductory study are an ideal supplement to classes on travel writing and the early colonial Americas that wish to reflect seriously on the impact of sailing and the ocean on written accounts. I certainly expect to return to this text in both my teaching and research in the years ahead.

Luis Alfonso Rodríguez-Rincón

Haverford College

**Scholz, Annette, and Marta Álvarez, editoras. *Cineastas emergentes: Mujeres en el cine del siglo XXI*. Iberoamericana–Vervuert, 2018, 305 pp., includes DVD.**

This eclectic yet substantial collection of essays stands out within a trend of a steadily growing number of books on women filmmakers. The book is organized into four parts of differing lengths: an introduction, critical overviews, and essays on Spanish and Latin American filmmakers. The editors and individual authors position their work as a political act of affirming the place of women in the cinematic canon. A range of essay genres is represented—from manifesto, to statistical analysis, to interpretative articles on specific films. Unique aspects of the volume are the attention to women animators as well as to "other cinema," understood here as primarily independent documentaries from various Hispanic markets; thus the essays' range expands the notion and appreciation of film. Furthermore, the inclusion of a DVD of nine short films with accompanying lesson plans for instructors