

Graduate Student Lecture Series
Thursday, January 17, 6:30 p.m., Nau Hall 211

Miracles in the Desert: Cabeza de Vaca and the American Landscape

Caroline Whitcomb

In Cabeza de Vaca's 1555 *relación*, he details an extensive struggle for survival in landscapes of extreme scarcity. His purposeful narrative construction of *Naufragios* suggests an equally purposeful construction of the American landscape in which he casts both land and sea environments as deserts, but deserts not lacking in narrative interludes: the inexplicably miraculous events that often derive from the landscapes themselves allow it to function as a space where the unexpected is expected to happen. In this text, the American landscape is not part of a discourse of failure as some have argued, but a space of the possible that gives rise to moments of the miraculous.

Cervantine Self-Fashioning in Fernando Aramburu's *Patria*

Alison Posey

Cervantes' Dulcinea does not participate in *Don Quijote's* dialogue, and yet still appears a vivid character as real as the other female characters who do speak in the novel. Dulcinea, a figment of others' imaginations, forms a sharp contrast with Part I of the *Quijote's* Marcela, who fashions an authoritative self through dialogue with other characters. Her self, like Dulcinea's, is relational to others'; however, her radical self-fashioning frees her from Dulcineism—Ruth El Saffar's theory of objectification of female characters for and by male characters. Instead, Marcela makes herself a character that transgresses conventional narratives, both cultural and literary. Likewise, a similar rejection of Dulcineism and a desire to craft her life story as a Basque patriot through her dialectical exchanges with others in *Patria* enables Miren, a principal female character in Fernando Aramburu's 2016 expansive novel, to fashion a self that actively contravenes the general perspective of her son's supposed crimes as an *etarra*. In this presentation, I consider the Cervantine technique of rhetorical self-fashioning in characters such as Marcela and I trace this technique in the development of the character of Miren in Aramburu's contemporary novel, *Patria*.

El tema de la violencia en la literatura colombiana

Savannah Aigner

La violencia ha marcado la literatura colombiana desde la época colonial hasta el día de hoy. Según Gabriel García Márquez, la literatura colombiana «era un gran inventario de cadáveres.» Aunque los tipos de violencia han evolucionado a través de los años, la violencia sigue siendo una sombra que marca el país andino y, desde luego, este tema se presenta en la literatura. En este trabajo, intento analizar la persistente influencia de la violencia en la literatura colombiana. Igualmente, presto mucha atención en el fondo histórico de la literatura e historia colombiana para dar un contexto histórico de la violencia que todavía se vive. Específicamente, analizo la novela, *Los ejércitos* de Evelio Romero que, según el reconocido poeta colombiano, a quien tuve el placer de entrevistar, Federico Díaz-Granados, es «la gran novela sobre la violencia en Colombia.» Este análisis también proporciona una breve lista de las obras más importantes sobre las distintas violencias que han existido durante varias épocas de la historia colombiana. Sobre todo, se destaca la importancia de entender la historia de la violencia política y social a través de la literatura.