Looking Elsewhere: Editorial Amartí's (Re)presentation of Post/Conflict Ayacucho[1]

TESS RENKER
UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

> Al estudiar la época desde 1980, es importante tomar en cuenta que mientras hay una guerra entre los subversivos y el gobierno por definir qué es el Perú, en otro nivel, a la misma vez, existe una lucha entre individuos y grupos para definir qué es la literatura
> (Mark Cox, *Pachaticray*, 68)

Abstract
Since the onset of Peru's Internal Armed Conflict (~1980-2000), Peruvian writers have worked to narrate often unspeakable violences, contributing to a still-developing "Conflict Canon." Yet while the Conflict overwhelmingly impacted Indigenous individuals from the nation's rural Andean highlands and jungle lowlands, Peru's most critically acclaimed and bestselling narrations of Conflict predominantly belong to white men of means from Lima. These depictions of the civil war written for/from the capital frequently reproduce tired geo-racial imaginaries, taking their cue from Mario Vargas Llosa's polemic analysis of the 1983 murder of eight Peruvian journalists at the highland community of Uchuraccay (Ayacucho). Ayacucho, the Peruvian department most intensely victimized by Conflict violences, frequently appears in these narrations as a racialized wasteland. While scholars have produced significant analyses of the non-literary cultural production of Ayacuchan victims of the Conflict, the present essay considers the short fiction of Ayacuchans Erika Cuadros and Livio Huaripaucar, whose stories appear together in *Siete cuentos sin fin,* published by Editorial Amartí (Ayacucho). Considering the narratives themselves together with Editorial Amartí's promotional materials, Facebook posts, and media appearances, I suggest that the collection contests dominant geo-racial imaginaries, (re)presenting post-Conflict Ayacucho and its experience of civil war *against* the discourses of "bestseller" authors like Vargas Llosa. Crucially, I propose that Cuadros, Huaripaucar, and Editorial Amartí develop important "counterpublics" (Warner 2005) and, in doing so, achieve an antihegemonic symbiosis of content and form.

Keywords: Andean Studies, Peru, Ayacucho, Armed Conflict, Memory, Generación de los hijos

In the epigraph to this essay, Mark Cox reminds us of the "hidden stakes" of Peru's Internal Armed Conflict (~1980-2000), a civil war that resulted in some 70,000 lives lost, most of them Indigenous individuals from Peru's rural highlands and jungle lowlands. While Sendero Luminoso, the MRTA (Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amaru), and the Peruvian State fought to define "qué es el Perú" (Cox 68), another group of individuals waged a parallel battle "para definir qué es la literatura" (68). If for two centuries, as Doris Sommer's *Foundational Fictions* (1991) sustains, literature and nation-

building have gone hand-in-hand, it should come as no surprise that Peru's civil war catalyzed the sort of literary identity crisis Cox describes.[2] These "literary battles" emerged from the very tensions that sparked the outbreak of armed conflict in the first place and that, in turn, informed its devastating outcome for rural Indigenous communities:[3] fierce centralism, the convenient forgetting of provincial territories, and the reproduction of colonial-era racial imaginaries.[4] Literature of and following the Conflict made manifest the deep-rootedness of these transhistorical tensions, with the battle for "qué es *la* literatura [del Perú]" (my emphasis) posed by Cox, more often resembling a battle to resolve *who* can write "*la* literatura del Perú."

In a Peru still grappling with an unresolved colonial past, rampant racism, and the ongoing alienation of provincial territories, is it possible for historically marginalized groups to enter national discourse? Can a coastal literary establishment intent on upholding exclusionary notions of modernity, progress, and literarity make space for those who write from "the hinterland"? What about when this provincial hinterland is Ayacucho, that "corner of the dead" that, with the dawn on Peru's Internal Armed Conflict, became increasingly synonymous with senseless violence, premodern "backwardness," and an absolute incompatibility with neoliberal progress?[5] Ayacuchan experiences of this war—both of war and more generally—are not yet considered national experiences, with "the national" still reserved for the coastal and the *limeño*. All this, even though Ayacucho was the Peruvian department most dramatically impacted by the Conflict, with Ayacuchans accounting for 40 percent of calculated deaths and disappearances (Comisión de la Verdad y la Reconciliación 158).[6] This dynamic is comparable to that described by Toni Morrison in relation to "national" literatures of the United States: "[National literatures] do seem to end up describing and inscribing what is really on the national mind. For the most part, the literature of the United States has taken as its concern the architecture of a *new white man*" (14-15). In Peru, too, the exclusion of historically othered voices, subjectivities, and experiences from national literatures similarly reveals "what is really on the national mind," with the national mind here belonging to those poised to offer a national voice. White(r), coastal, and usually male subjectivities are made to stand for "the nation," both in the wake of armed conflict and beyond.[7]

Since the publication of the Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación's (CVR) *Informe final* (2003), a series of Conflict-related "bestsellers" have taken national literary circuits by storm, "bestsellers" that often reproduce longstanding geo-racial imaginaries. Taking their cue from Mario Vargas Llosa and his infamous report on the 1983 murder of eight journalists at Uchuraccay (Ayacucho), high-profile Peruvian novelists like Alonso Cueto and Santiago Roncagliolo have

engendered a series of narratives that posit Ayacucho as an archaic, racialized wasteland inhabited by the "Indigenous Other." Mario Vargas Llosa's own *Lituma en los Andes* (1993), Alonso Cueto's *Hora azul* (2005), and Santiago Roncagliolo's *Abril rojo* (2006) – all of which have achieved significant critical and commercial success – are obvious examples of this tendency. In each case, Ayacucho appears as a mysterious, infernal territory, separated both geographically and temporally from the modern metropolises from which their protagonists hail. Highlanders themselves rarely appear as fully embodied subjects, instead assuming the role of the less-than-modern racial Other, who is often attributed magical or supernatural qualities. Local mythologies and cosmologies enter the narratives as mere bursts of "magical realism," although not of the emancipatory quality observed in the work of José María Arguedas and Gabriel García Márquez. Instead, local mythologies are employed as a means of confirming dominant geo-racial imaginaries, with each author divorcing them from their greater cultural significance. Although presenting distinct iterations of the pseudo-detective novel, each author's depiction of Ayacucho situates the province as somehow less-than-real, less-than-modern, and, surely, less-than-white**.**

These critically acclaimed, commercially successful novels prove the extent to which race makes a place in Peru, with their temporal situatedness within the post/Conflict era only intensifying this dynamic.[7] In them, Ayacucho is not only racially and ethnically other but violently, chaotically so.[8] Of course, the commercial draw and critical celebration of these novels speaks to a related, parallel problematic: the Lima-centric, self-affirmingly white nature of national literary circuits in and of themselves. And I should mention that these dynamics mirror those described by Aníbal Quijano in his theorization of the "[c]olonialidad del poder, cultura y conocimiento" (137), namely the racialized nature of "[e]l patrón de la dominación entre los colonizadores y los otros" (139) and its subsequent imposition of "la condición deshonrosa [del] imaginario [de los otros] y de su propio y previo universo de subjetividad" (141).[9] In the context of Quijano's argument, Vargas Llosa, Cueto, and Roncagliolo might represent the continuation of a racialized, Eurocentric "dependencia histórico-cultural" (141), in which other(ed) ways of knowing, perceiving, and interpreting the Conflict are entirely disregarded if not wholly contested.

Responding to Ayacucho's violent experience of Conflict and parallel racialization by national literary establishments, the young Ayacuchan authors and editors—all born after 1985—featured in this essay work to imagine the department and its literatures on their own terms, simultaneously writing to, from, and beyond the Andean highlands. Positioning their narratives against the geo-racial imaginaries of Vargas Llosa, Cueto, and Roncagliolo—as well as the literary establishments they

represent—these writers aim to present "real," contemporary versions of Ayacucho and its experiences of Conflict, those which evade Lima's essentializing gaze altogether. They not only (re)stage Ayacucho and its experience of war but also (re)imagine the department's relationship with the world at large. In what follows, I examine the literary output and editorial practices of this new generation of Ayacuchans, those whose childhood experiences of conflict place them within Peru's own *generación de los hijos*.[10]I focus my attention on the short fiction of Erika Cuadros (1986-) and Livio Huaripaucar (1987-), both of whom are active members of the important Asociación de Escritores de Ayacucho (AEDA).[11] Cuadros's and Huaripaucar's short stories appear together in *Siete cuentos sin fin* (2016), a collection produced by the Editorial Amartí, a Huamanga-based publishing house led by Luis Eduardo Ayala Pérez (1986-). I argue that each author's contributions actively dismantle post/Conflict geo-racial imaginaries while just as actively rejecting any form of regional or generational consensus. I propose that the featured AEDA (Asociación de Escritores Ayacuchanos)/Amartí collection presents iterations of post/Conflict Ayacucho that underscore the "realness," the contemporaneity, and the "plurality" (Daly 7) of the highlands and their inhabitants, while still illuminating the intersecting nature of Conflict violences.[12]

My essay also considers how the collection's materiality, circulation, and institutional affiliation reflect the narratives' antihegemonic charge. Here the collective nature of Amartí's and the AEDA's project is crucial, as it allows a variety of actors and voices to shape an increasingly contestatory Ayacuchan literary culture. Moreover, it registers a decisive distancing from the author-centric, neoliberal editorial practices of transnational publishing houses, particularly those that have historically circulated Conflict-related bestsellers. To this end, while I analyze each author's narratives as expressions of their own life experiences, positionality, and ideological orientation, I also read their short fiction as extensions of the ideological and aesthetic concerns of the AEDA/Amartí. Akin to the multi-valiant efforts of *Boletín Titikaka* editors in the 1920s—who sought to (re)present Puno (Peru) and its relationship to the contemporary and the modern—the authors and editors featured in this chapter propose alternative orientations towards Ayacuchan space and place vis-à-vis the contemporary and the modern, all the while imagining new orientations towards a diverse swath of literatures and literary circuits. Finally, and by way of conclusion, I underscore the urgency of reading, circulating, and analyzing provincial *literature* of/about the Conflict. I suggest that taking these often-marginalized literary circuits seriously helps break down traditional lettered-unlettered binaries.

Editorial Amaratí and the AEDA

Founded in 1997, the Asociación de Escritores Ayacuchanos (AEDA) is a Huamanga-based literary association and the self-described "pilar de la cultura del departamento de Ayacucho" (Facebook, AEDA). It maintains a close working relationship with Editorial Amartí, a local publishing house committed to producing Ayacucho-authored literature. Apart from a few reprints of classic *neo/indigenista* texts, most authors featured by Amartí are AEDA members, proving the extent to which the publishing house serves as a fluid extension of the association (Amartí's founder-editor-director, Luis Eduardo Ayala Pérez, is also president of the AEDA). Nevertheless, the organizations diverge in at least one significant way: while the AEDA promotes and distributes the work of all Ayacuchan authors—no matter the perceived quality of the poetry or prose in question—Amartí aims to gather the department's most outstanding examples of poetry, literature, and literary criticism, subjecting would-be authors to a rigorous internal revisions process (Personal Interview). Amartí and the AEDA thus work to sustain Ayacuchan literatures on multiple fronts, with the former showcasing the region's robust literary tradition and the latter growing Ayacucho's pool of authors and creators in a more horizontal fashion. To this end, most Amartí/AEDA texts circulate exclusively within the department of Ayacucho. If publications manage to travel further, this is almost always thanks to collaboration across independent publishers and department-specific literary collaboratives (Personal Interview).

Despite the local-centric orientation of the AEDA/Amartí, Ayacucho's positioning, vis-à-vis national literary establishments, is central to both groups' ideological platforms. Both organizations maintain a self-conscious positioning away from white(r), Lima-centric editorial practices, which they qualify as fundamentally flawed. In fact, this concern for evading and contesting "national" literary establishments served as a principal motivator for Amartí's founding (Personal Interview). A 2013 Facebook post announcing the launch of Amartí addressed their concern and, by extension, AEDA's concern, for contesting the apparent supremacy of a centralized, exclusionary, and increasingly neoliberal national literary-cultural establishment:

> El pequeño Proyecto Amartí surgió con la inquietud sobre la carencia de una institución que se preocupe sobre temas culturales en nuestra región, se necesita un espacio y una institución que haga frente a la privación e ineficiencia de las autoridades con respecto a la cultura. Tal vez la violencia social sufrida en los años 80 en nuestro Ayacucho sea un tropo importante para que Ayacucho viva en un letargo hasta nuestros días. Estamos empezando a vivir en una sociedad con una vida de consumismo cada vez más crudo y despiadado. Nuestros niños y jóvenes pierden

> identidad y sensibilidad, la generación X se va extinguiendo para empezar a vivir en un país familiar con una globalización colonial. Frente a ello, sin ir muy lejos, anticipamos que en noviembre saldrá la primera publicación por Amartí. (Editorial Amartí, my emphasis)

Amartí's stated disappointment in institutional absence—"la carencia de una institución que se preocupe sobre temas culturales en nuestra región"—is made manifest, as is, more implicitly, the group's frustration with Lima's (mis)distribution of funding for literary and cultural initiatives, both national and department-specific. In an interview with Ayacucho publication *Jornada,* Ayala Pérez more directly addresses this matter, as well as the "no llegada" of Ayacuchan cultural materials to Peruvian society at large: "el año pasado el Ministerio de Cultura dio 50 millones de soles para actividades culturales; pero sin embargo … casi todo el presupuesto se quedó en Lima."

As will become clear, this frustration with *limeño* institutions and establishments not only appears in Amartí's manifesto; the narratives featured in *Siete cuentos*—as well as the introductory materials that accompany the collection—work to reproduce this same editorial ideology. In this sense, Amartí's/the AEDA's texts—of which *Siete cuentos* is but a single example—evidence a certain symbiosis between content and materiality, which I here understand to encompass physical form, processes of production, and circulation. Like the "organic books" studied by Magalí Rabasa, each collection's "materiality" and movement coopt and advance the subversive, disruptive charge of the narratives they house:

> [the organic book] is the materialization of an alternative political-economic praxis that its pages—which is to say, its content—also propose. The book in movement is organic to the political practices it describes. It is a book made of the very practices that it transmits through its text … It grows as it moves; it becomes something more while remaining the same. (10)

While the texts described by Rabasa are primarily theoretical in nature, the interconnectedness of discourse, form, and circulation she describes resonates with the Amartí/AEDA collection discussed in this essay. This is especially true given that *Siete cuentos* demonstrates a two-pronged concern relative to *limeño* establishments (Ayala Pérez, "Presentación" 7): first, the undoing of dominant representations of highland geographies, and second, "provincial literature's" more literal orientation towards global, national, and local literary circuits. The collection's literary discourse enacts and reproduces the spirit of its material circumstances, and vice versa.

Amartí's/the AEDA's concern for circulation, materiality, and the contestation of literary establishments similarly recalls Michael Warner's theorization of "publics" and "counterpublics." Warner defines publics as "intertextual, frameworks for understanding texts against an organized background of the circulation of other texts" (16) but reminds us that any notion of "the public" or of a singular all-encompassing public is but a fiction. Those in positions of power may claim to address and belong to *the* public, but this is, according to Warner, an "imaginary point of convergence" aimed at sustaining the illusion of "ideal unity" (55). It is, I argue, against this fictional "ideal unity" that the AEDA/Amartí mobilize. In doing so, both organizations establish important "counterpublics," those publics that are "by definition, formed by their conflict with the norms and contexts of their cultural environment" (63). Crucially, the creation of a counterpublic—which is, of course, still imaginary in the sense that one can never know a discursive object's cultural reach—implies an antihegemonic *act*, "a new, creative and distinctly modern form of power" (108). Thus, the question of public is transformed from a cultural given to a space of contestation, allowing us to understand the counterpublics formed by groups like Amartí and the AEDA as "scenes of self-activity, of historical rather than timeless belonging, and of active participation rather than prescriptive belonging" (89). Warner puts it succinctly in this way, "the direction of our glance can constitute our social world" (89), with this move to glance, look, and/or address "elsewhere" rupturing the perceived supremacy and singularity of dominant publics.

Amartí's founding Facebook post/manifesto primarily locates the organization's positioning vis-à-vis "autoridades con respecto a la cultura," who they seem to define as purveyors of dominant publics. Nevertheless, it does reference at least one tangible sociopolitical entity: Peru's Internal Armed Conflict. This brief mention of the Conflict suggests that the war initiated a boiling over of historical continuities, one that ultimately stretched these continuities into the present: "Tal vez la violencia social sufrida en los años 80 en nuestro Ayacucho sea un tropo importante para que Ayacucho viva en un letargo hasta nuestros días." The curious phrasing "la violencia social sufrida en los años 80"—which clearly alludes to Peru's Internal Armed Conflict but makes possible the inclusion of other social violences—registers a refusal to approach the war as a singular, tangible entity, that is,, the type of conflict that has a clear beginning and end, obvious stakes, and easily identifiable victims and perpetrators. Instead, and as the narratives featured in this article confirm, the Conflict is treated as an amorphous whole, composed of infinitely more "violencia(s) social(es)" (as referenced in the aforementioned Facebook post by Editorial Amartí) than are typically acknowledged. Hence, the "letargo" referenced in the post conjures an image of ongoing, transhistorical violences—despite,

ironically, both the State's and Sendero Luminoso's (Shining Path) stated plans to "fix" the highlands—that will continue to creep into an indeterminate future.

While Ayacucho has become all but synonymous with armed conflict, this mention of the war alongside "letargo" is still curious. Why not, for instance, reference the shortcomings of Agrarian Reform (1969-1979) or the department's notorious "underdevelopment"? The answer, I believe, has something to do with the Conflict's thrusting of Ayacucho into the literary spotlight, one that was at least partially ignited by Vargas Llosa's, Cueto's, and Roncagliolo's respective portrayals of the department. And it is this very spotlight against which the AEDA and Amartí position themselves: that distorting, geo-racialized spotlight that casts an essentializing, *limeño* gaze upon Ayacucho and its people, all the while reducing the already minimal space from which Ayacuchans may (re)present themselves to national audiences (Personal Interview).[13] For the AEDA/Amartí, the Conflict brings a series of intersecting violences—literal and symbolic, literary and extra-literary—to a decisive head. Treating the greater Conflict-era implies untangling an intricate web of transhistorical "violencia(s) social(es)," one that many *limeño* authors and critics can hardly perceive or, better, choose to ignore. It is *limeño* narrators' and editorials' lack of acknowledgment of this web that has implicitly allowed "Ayacucho as inferno," "Ayacucho as warzone," and "Ayacucho as *provincia de indios*" imaginings to flood national literary and cultural scenes.

Surely, not all AEDA/Amartí authors treat the Conflict or the post/Conflict era, even if—as Ayala Pérez recently confirmed—a large swatch of AEDA/Amartí authors continue to interrogate the war in their poetry and prose (Personal Interview). But those who do face nothing less than the following two tasks: make visible the complex web of violence long suffered by highlanders and simultaneously (re)present Ayacucho as something more than the racialized wasteland imagined in/from Lima. It is precisely this, I argue, that *Siete cuentos* attempts to achieve.

Siete cuentos sin fin

Published by Editorial Amartí in 2016, *Siete cuentos sin fin* features the short fiction of two members of the AEDA: Erika Cuadros and Livio Huaripaucar.[14] The selected stories—the first three authored by Cuadros and the latter four by Huaripaucar—reflect the authors' close proximity to local places, histories, and cosmologies.[15] As the collection's back cover suggests, the stories offer a panorama of Ayacucho's recent past, where "los *qarqachas, brujos* y la *violencia política* se hacen presentes como personajes que marcan la vida de sus protagonistas." Primarily centered on the experiences of adolescent protagonists, the collection offers a meditation on the childhoods of both authors, which

were undoubtedly inflected by ongoing political violence. Although both writers belong to Ayacucho's generación de los hijos, the "Presentación" section and the collection's back-cover commentary suggest that Huaripaucar sustained more direct contact with highland communities during the war years. The decision to house their narratives in a single volume appears motivated by editorial leadership's desire to trace the contours of this new generation and, in turn, the future of the Ayacuchan narrative. According to Ayala Pérez, who penned the "Presentación," Cuadros and Huaripaucar may be considered "las nuevas figuras de la literatura ayacuchana" ("Presentación" 7).

The collection's introductory materials foretell the protagonism of local, Ayacuchan geographies, as well as their plural treatment by Cuadros and Huaripaucar. On its back cover, Ayala Pérez describes *Siete cuentos* first and foremost as "un libro de ficción que contiene cuentos dinámicos [que] están ambientados en Ayacucho." The brief blurb goes on to present the collection as a literary "aventura" to "el ande peruano." Yet the "aventura" to the highlands advertised by Amartí bears little resemblance to those narrated by Vargas Llosa, Cueto, and Roncagliolo, as the following back-cover description lays bare: "Cada cuento es una aventura para entender un poco más lo nuestro y una invitación al lector para recorrer nuestra tradición mágica e histórica del ande peruano." Already here, the juxtaposition of "aventura" and "mágica" with "histórica" and "lo nuestro" anticipates a literary treatment of the highlands that resists the sort of racializations often employed by those writing for/from afar. That is, it foretells a sort of plurality that would allow various iterations of "the real" to coexist on the same ontological plane. That this adventure will enable the reader to "entender un poco más lo nuestro" further marks its distance from the *limeño* pseudo-detective novel, whose authors, as Anne Lambright argues, do not seek to "entender" the experiences of the Conflict's most othered victims, instead opting to "return to the status quo … [u]nable to shake the confines of a discourse comfortably familiar to their intended audiences" (31). In contrast, the "entender" promised by Ayala Pérez would instead offer a virtual encounter with rural Ayacucho that reduces the distance between reader and referent.

Similarly penned by Ayala Pérez, the collection's "Presentación" offers a comparable evaluation of the narratives it contains, underscoring the protagonism of the highlands and proposing that the accumulation of actors—both human and non-human—featured in the stories collectively conjure the region's "esencia": "El presente libro abraza un pequeño abanico de cuentos cuyos símbolos *representan el ande y, en su esencia, la vida del campo*" (7, my emphasis). While Ayala Pérez subsequently confirms that each narrative includes "una representación del imaginario" (7)—that is, the fictional or mythical—his initial claim above that *Siete cuentos* invokes "el ande" and "la vida del

campo" implies that the stories seek a relatively faithful evocation of the spaces they reproduce, while still maintaining a plural, antihegemonic iteration of "the real." The editorial director's suggestion that the collection is "[tan] dinámico como didáctico" (7), offering readers the opportunity to "descubrir un pasado *cercano*" (7, my emphasis) further proves this point while simultaneously affirming the contemporaneity of the places to be explored.

Siete cuentos's introductory materials set the stage for a series of narratives that exceed hegemonic understandings of "the real" while still affirming their proximity to the here, the now, and the once was. Penned by Erika Cuadros, the first story of the collection, "Una mascota sin DNI," may be read as a justification of this discursive strategy. At first blush, the narrative appears out of place in *Siete cuentos,* even with the diversity of aesthetic and thematic approaches that the collection houses. While subsequent stories relate to the post/Conflict-era or community-centered violence either directly or tangentially, "Una mascota sin DNI" bears no explicit connection to violence of either sort. Saúl, a recent migrant from rural Tambillo (Ayacucho), comes home from primary school struggling to understand his homework. His teacher had asked him to write a "descripción," a word the student does not understand. Despite having only completed primary school herself, Saúl's mother explains the term, leading the boy to conclude that "describir era también escribir, otra forma de escribir" (11). After completing his "trabajo arquitectónico con las letras" (11), Saúl returns to school, sharing a detailed description of his pet dog with the class. Upon completing the reading, a "perro astroso, flaco y pelón" (12) appears in the doorway of the classroom. Addressing the students, Saúl's dog, Uchpa, begins to refute his owner's very generous "descripción":

> [El perro] mismo tomó la palabra y dijo que su nombre no era Mariuns, sino Uchpa como le había llamado su dueño con mucho cariño … Por lo demás no tenía apellidos, menos un DNI, de la especie peruana, con veinte cifras, y una huella digital de la pata derecha que cojeaba … Tampoco asistía a un colegio de perros, pues donde vivían no había un lugar donde los animales se eduquen … Que era ágil, no era cierto, pues cojeaba y encima era el más débil de los perros que existieron en casa y le pegaron por eso. (12)

Despite his stated appreciation of Saulito's exaltations, Uchpa goes on to further dispute the student's claims, ultimately declaring himself "un perro salido de los infiernos, con poca gracia" (12). The story ends abruptly thereafter, with Saúl's mother waking him to get ready for school; the entire episode had been a dream.

Notwithstanding its singularity and lack of direct reference to post/Conflict violences, "Una mascota sin DNI" offers important insight into Cuadros's and Huaripaucar's collective narrative project. Taken in the context of Ayala Pérez's "Presentación" and back-cover commentary, Cuadros's first story offers an ode to narration and narration's potential to encompass multiple and competing realities. Saúl's definition of "descripción" as "otra forma de escribir" and a "trabajo arquitectónico con las letras" (11) further suggests that the act of writing is always an act of reifying some facet of reality, including those places and personhoods not recognized as such by hegemonic discourse. Despite occurring in the context of a dream, the boy's "trabajo arquitectónico" gives life and voice to a subject who had been perpetually othered by human society—here, his pet dog. It may not be coincidental that Uchpa's animalization, lack of citizenship, and exclusion from educational institutions all mirror the lived experiences of large swaths of Ayacuchan highlanders, particularly during the post/Conflict-era. Taken as a partial meditation on the positionality of rural Ayacuchans, "Una mascota sin DNI" presents narrative—both imaginative and realist—as a possible inroad for the (re)presentation of "el ande" and its "pasado cercano" ("Presentación" 7).

Notably, this subtle call to (re)present comes without any explicit mention of which imaginaries, histories, and identities to privilege. Rather, it is plurality and multiplicity that define both the "descripción" presented by Saúl and the narrative project of Cuadros and Huaripaucar. In "Una mascota sin DNI," Cuadros presents three conflicting images of Uchpa—that shared by Saúl, Uchpa's own self-description, and, by extension, greater society's vision of him—without ever confirming which most closely resembles the signified. Truth, reality, and representation are all evaded while still giving voice to and challenging misreadings of the protagonist's beloved dog. This first narrative suggests that the most apt response to the discursive othering of Ayacucho and its inhabitants is not necessarily an ethnographic account of defining traumas but the production of an unruly plurality of (re)presentations, discourses, and subjectivities. The story's clear evocation of Miguel de Cervantes's *El coloquio de los perros* (1613) further supports this reading. Cuadros seemingly draws on the novella to establish both the reifying potential of narration and the urgency of contesting dominant imaginaries. Cervantes's exploration of other possible authorships and subject positions—perhaps most blatantly expressed through the *pícaro*—finds its natural echo in *Siete cuentos*'s explicit contestation of coastal elites and their disregard for "regional" voices. Moreover, John Beusterein's recent reading of the *novela ejemplar*'s canine protagonists points to the work's deconstruction of "foundational anthropocentric precedents" and radical disruption of then-hegemonic imaginaries (54).[16] Cuadros's evocation of Cervantes thus appears quite natural, particularly given the geographic determinism that

underpins dominant renderings of the highlands. What is more, Cuadros's appropriation of a Spanish, male-authored "founding fiction" to produce contestatory highland fictions of her own, proves highly evocative in its own right.

Explicitly suggestive of Conflict-era violences, Cuadros's second and third stories attempt to make sense of the highlands' nearly unbelievable sufferings while still contesting hegemonic discourses, imaginaries, and representations. The first, "Ojitos de paso," describes the experience of a young girl from the highlands who witnesses the disappearance of her father. Having already lost her mother among "las misteriosas cumbres de las punas" (13), the unnamed six-year-old witnesses her father return from the fields in a hurry, only to then destroy a hidden radio "como si alguien lo buscaba, o mejor dicho, lo perseguía para terminar con lo ultimo que quedaba" (13). Acquiring a newfound, superhuman strength, the patriarch then bursts forth from the home, moving "las piedras más grandes con mucha facilidad" (14), all before disappearing into the *altiplano*. The girl soon perceives "gritos furibundos e incomprensibles," followed by a series of sounds that resemble trees being ripped from their trunks, rocks falling into neighboring valleys, and the complete destruction of pastures. The omniscient, third-person narrator bluntly confirms that "[n]o se supo más de él" (14), before detailing how the young girl, "como de costumbre," begins to complete her evening chores, just as her loyal canine companion sounds the alarm that "algo maléfico se acercaba" (14).

In this second narrative, the altiplano appears to collaborate with the protagonist's presumably Senderista father, endowing him with superhuman strengths comparable to those of Andean *apus*. The Andes take on an ancestral ferocity but not the apocalyptic, pre-modern ferocity that Vargas Llosa, Cueto, and Roncagliolo place beyond the realm of reason and historicity. The demonic behavior of *their* Senderistas is replaced by heroism and courage coopted by the natural world. The chaotic wasteland depicted by "bestseller" authors finds its exact inverse in Cuadros's "ande" (not capitalized in the original in Spanish), a space where humans and nature work together to prevent the unilateral destruction of "lo que quedaba" (13). Furthermore, Cuadros's shifting of viewpoint from a white *limeño* man to a non-white female child inevitably breaks with dominant discursive hierarchies. The result is a narrative that "pierces through the entanglements of power," in Macarena Gómez-Barris's eloquent phrasing (11), proposing new orientations towards the post/Conflict and life in the highlands more generally. Here Cuadros's emphasis on childhood subjectivity surely speaks to the author's own belonging to Ayacucho's and Huancavelica's generación de los hijos. But it may also represent a challenge to dominant epistemologies, worldviews, and notions of "the real," particularly those corresponding to coastal elites. To this end, Susan Honeyman defines childhood as a "cultural

construct," elucidating the ways in which children are posited by the West not only as innocent non-adults but also as beings who are unequivocally "pre-sexual, irrational, and unschooled" (3). Just as Ayacuchans have long been posited as "subjects of discourse" (Lambright 19) devoid of the capacity to relay their own experiences, Honeyman argues that "childhood has been defined by adult discourse as that which cannot engage in adult discourse" (4). As Tim Morris succinctly puts it, "[c]hildhood is a form of Otherness, possibly its archetypal form" (qtd. in Honeyman 4). Thus, the child's gaze may serve as a stand-in for a series of gazes often ignored or rebuffed by centers of power.

While maintaining this emphasis on childhood subjectivities and the otherness they may represent, Cuadros's third story, "Jugando a las maldiciones," moves in a decidedly different direction, pluralizing the "esencia" ("Presentación" 7) evoked by the collection. Shifting her discursive kaleidoscope, in this next narrative Cuadros moves away from the human-spatial harmony of "Ojitos de paso" to tell the story of a child who advances into adulthood thinking himself responsible for a series of deaths experienced in his village. While the first two deaths—one caused by a fallen adobe roof and the other by a car accident—appear relatively innocuous, the next—which include an "atragantamiento" (15), a poisoning, and a hanging—are clearly marked by human violence and likely informed by the Conflict. The story's unnamed protagonist may be "al margen de las muertes que sucedieron" (15), but he nevertheless grows to think himself endowed with the power to inflict death upon his enemies. At a family party, the protagonist's brothers confront him about his sudden "comportamiento parco, frío" (16), leading the disturbed youth to beat them and then leave town: "El ultimo día que lo vieron fue con su corroída mochila llena de cachivaches y amuletos. Tenía la misma mirada, con la nostalgia apilada en su corazón, con el alma solitaria, observó el sendero que se pierde en el horizonte" (17). "Jugando a maldiciones," like "Ojitos de paso," offers a clear meditation on the guilt and despair produced by the inability to prevent wartime violences during one's childhood. Nevertheless, Cuadros's redeployment of the child expresses the more general ambivalence and confusion of the post-Conflict "ande." As the play-on-words employed in the story's final line suggests —"observó el sendero que se pierde en el horizonte"—the disappearance of Sendero has not resulted in readymade resolutions, but rather the opening of other "senderos" towards uncertain futures.

The defiant tone of "Ojitos de paso" is thus met with the uncertainty of "Jugando a las maldiciones," pluralizing a series of stories that resist any urge to arrive at a coherent "esencia" or singular (re)presentation of the highlands. If "Una mascota sin DNI" opens the collection with a sort of narrative manifesto, Cuadros's subsequent stories offer a (re)presentation of a post/Conflict "ande" that is at odds with itself and, thus, at odds with essentializing inscriptions produced for/from

elsewhere. Livio Huaripaucar's contributions to *Siete cuentos* further expand the collection's plurality with four short stories that collectively challenge the possibility of arriving at any singular "esencia." Whereas Erika Cuadros's contributions—which constitute the collection's first section—manifest their own radical plurality as a narrative block, Huaripaucar's stories alternate between two distinct discursive registers: the second-person narration of explicit Conflict violences, and the first-person narration of recent, local encounters with *qarqachas*. Stories I and III employ the former, whereas II and IV make use of the latter.

Huaripaucar's first narrative, "¡Ya vienen!"—which represents the first of the aforementioned discursive registers—is perhaps the most antihegemonic of his stories and even of the collection as a whole. Told in the second-person singular, "¡Ya vienen!" recounts the harrowing experience of an adolescent who flees his village after an attack by Sendero militants. Immediately thrusting the reader into the position of the fleeing child, the narrative begins with a second-person description of the protagonist's emotional state, followed by future-tense speculation:

> Estás asustado y tu corazón quiere reventar de miedo sentado en ese tronco enmohecido de la ribera de ese río furibundo que brama fuerte, sientes friolentos latigazos del viento en el rostro sudoroso y timorato. Echas un vistazo al caminejo por donde acabas de huir. Pronto se esconderá el sol, no habrá por dónde ir, por dónde, ni cómo. Estás cansado, muy cansado y los pies te pesan como nunca. Escuchas voces que se pierden en la espesura silenciosa. Mala suerte. Son los camaradas de Sendero Luminoso que huyen desesperados de los *sinchis*. Con la luna llena que les ayudará en la noche, se librarán del valle, subirán a las punas y se confundirán con ellas. (21)

Compared to the voyeuristic gaze of dominant renderings of Ayacucho, Huaripaucar's use of the second person forces his reader to occupy an Ayacucho staged for/from within, doing away with the more comfortable distance afforded by third-person narration. Becoming one with the story's Ayacuchan protagonist, the reader engages in a sensory experience marked by emotional disturbance, physical discomfort, and tangible interactions with the natural world. The Ayacuchan body is made material, texturizing and animating a subject position frequently relegated to the one-dimensional by *limeño* elites. The same holds true for the places traversed by the unnamed protagonist. Huaripaucar's careful narration of the natural world's contact with the human body—"sentado en ese tronco enmohecido … sientes friolentos latigazos del viento" (21)—reifies and makes "real" places that are too often shelved in the realm of the imaginary, with the highlands literally reaching out to touch his reader-protagonist.

Huaripaucar soon shifts to a narration sustained by the preterit and imperfect tenses, all with the intention of elucidating the events that provoked his narrator-protagonist's decision to flee. The youth was playing in the town's central plaza when "de repente las calles vomitaron a muchos senderistas de todas partes" (21). From there, the square erupted in unthinkable violence, culminating in a gruesome chorus of machete blows and shrapnel fire:

> Mirabas el atrio de la iglesia, cadáveres desfigurados con los brazos partidos y las cabezas arrancadas. Seguían retumbando los golpes y las metrallas traspasaron los cuerpos vendados hasta clavarse en las paredes. Había sonoros machetazos que rematan a los que se ponían en pie y después de morir… (21)

Yet while the scene's brutality—which is made all the more intense by the use of the second person—may approximate the gory treatment of Ayacuchan bodies more common to hegemonic discourse, the ellipsis that completes the paragraph cuts the recollection short, as if to categorize what would follow as unspeakable or, at least, unnarratable. The next paragraph, which appears to pick up just a few minutes later, confirms the intentionality of the ellipses, as well as the author's refusal of a voyeuristic gaze:

> Ahora tenían que morir las mujeres. Les rociaron con combustible. Tú solo mirabas, no podías hacer nada, parecías invisible … No podías creer: es que eres jovencito aún y no vales más que una indiferencia. Cuando ellas te miran, tu mirada se aleja. *Ya no las ves*. (22, my emphasis)

While the paragraph surely speaks to the guilt felt by the children of victimized adults—as is partially the case in Erika Cuadros's "Ojitos de pasa" and "Jugando a maldiciones"—Huaripaucar's emphasis on the act of looking suggests a broader concern for inaction, particularly as it relates to coastal elites and questions of voyeurism. Taken together with the prior ellipsis, this description of the reader-protagonist's distant "mirada" underscores his exteriority and confirms the inherent friction wrapped-up with his subject position, a friction that goes almost entirely unacknowledged in the Conflict-related novelizations of Vargas Llosa, Cueto, and Roncagliolo. The fact that the paragraph's final "Ya no las ves" appears in the present tense suggests an additional level of friction, ironically born not from having looked but, instead, from having looked and now refusing to keep looking.

The evident friction resulting from the reader-narrator's looking is further complicated by Huaripaucar's use of the second person. Interpellated directly into the narrative, the reader has no choice but to look, watch, and then experience shame for having done so. As if responding to the voyeurism that has come to define dominant viewings, imaginings, and representations of highland

experiences of war, the author forces his reader to experience the violence of an exterior, othering gaze in the flesh. This staging of the actionless voyeur—who, here, gazes upon his own Ayacuchan kin—entirely disrupts normative orientations towards the highlands, reflecting *back* at the reader discursive violences typically directed *towards* the Ayacuchan other. Yet Huaripaucar soon lets up, moving away from the violence of that fateful morning. The second-person reader-protagonist, however, is still on the run, with his footsteps carrying him "en dirección contraria donde [le] esperan horizontes desconocidos" (23). Despite the pain and trauma produced by the attack, what follows is not the anticipation of an impending wasteland. Instead, a series of contestatory recollections emerge that speak to the region's beauty, all informed by the protagonist's "impresión [s]uyamente primaveral que luego no podr[á] olvidar" (23). That is, after removing the reader-protagonist from the position of voyeur, Huaripaucar now offers him an intensely Ayacuchan gaze, with the continued use of the second-person singular forcing an identification with "other" orientations to and (re)presentation of the highlands.

Huaripaucar's (re)orientation of his reader begins with a narrative celebration of the town's proximity to the natural world and its benevolent *apus*. Recalling José María Arguedas's visit to the village to collect stories for *Cuentos mágicos quechuas de Lucanamarca* (1961), the narrator confirms that it is indeed "un lugar que encierra maravillosas enigmas" a space that is fundamentally "maravillo y hasta mágico" (23). This reference to Arguedas helps establish Huaripaucar's—and, by extension, Cuadros's—positionality as "provincial" authors, but here it also serves to legitimize and authenticate the magic observed by the narrator. In this instance, Arguedas the ethnographer—versus Arguedas the provincial writer—wields the interpretive power necessary to bestow Lucanamarca with a special significance, prompting the narrator to impose the following reflection on his reader-protagonist: "Tenías el privilegio de haber nacido arraigado a la naturaleza. Te gustaba el campo siempre verde y lozano, escuchar el trino de las avecillas, observar el arco iris que engalana el horizonte cuando el sol se pone, gozar del coqueteo de las flores silvestres y multicolores que invitan a enamorar" (24). With his reader-protagonist left gazing back at Lucanamarca, Huaripaucar's second-person narrator closes the story with an acknowledgment of his "magical" Ayacuchan sensibility and, in turn, a refusal of any geo-racial imaginary that would codify the highlands within a grammar of violence: "Por eso aún viven en sus caminos tus travesías; en sus calles, tu infancia, tus anhelos; en sus amaneceres, tus amores; en sus lejanías, tus misterios" (26).

Situated directly after a short meditation on the protagonist's childhood adoration of his family's cows, the "por eso" that opens the final paragraph is left undetermined. Without any clear

referent, "por eso" seems to refer to the whole of the narrator's musings—musings that are directly imposed on the reader-protagonist—as if to express that the ineffable wonder of "la vida del campo" ("Presentación" 7) shall live on, forever inscribed in the highlands of his youth. That such joyous recollections of childhood splendor shall continue to inhabit Lucanamarca—a village that is still virtually synonymous with the 1983 Sendero massacre that occurred there—runs entirely counter to hegemonic logic, both in terms of the memories' estrangement from Conflict-era violence and, of equal importance, the contemporaneity implied by "aún viven" (26)[17]. The ellipsis that closes the story suggests that the memories not only "*aún* viven" (26, my emphasis), but shall continue to live on into the future. The story and its protagonist's recollections expand outward into space and time, continuing to propagate the alternative orientations and (re)presentations they have sown.

Further disputing hegemonic geo-racial imaginaries and pluralizing the collection as a whole, stories II and IV—"¿Miedoso yo?" and "Un encuentro inesperado"—move away from the forced intimacy of Huaripaucar's second person narrations.[18] Adopting the first-person singular, both narratives describe adolescent encounters with suspected *qarqachas*, mythical beings from the Quechua tradition, described by the narrator of "¿Miedoso yo?" as "un ser que sufre una mutación de una persona a una llama o algún otro animal a causa de su comportamiento pecaminoso" (27). This "comportamiento pecaminoso" typically relates to incest, yet the creature proves most frightening upon taking its animal shape: "[el qarqacha] se comía a las crías de animales y era capaz de comerse a niños como yo" (Huaripaucar, *Siete cuentos* 29). Less formally complex and ideologically charged than "¡Ya vienen!" and "La última captura," stories II and IV adopt a more ethnographic, testimonial register, often approximating a recorded oral history. Plainly and without the narrative gymnastics of stories I and III, "¿Miedoso yo?" recalls the first-person narrator's violent encounter with the village *qarqacha* after losing a soccer ball in his yard. The shortest of Huaripaucar's four stories, "Un encuentro inesperado," describes the experience of a teenage narrator-protagonist who, in the wake of a drunken celebration, discovers that his own godfather may be a *qarqacha*.

Set in a recent present entirely removed from the Conflict violences considered in stories I and III, narratives II and IV have the effect of narrative asides. Sandwiched between intense meditations on highland experiences of armed conflict, "¿Miedoso yo?" and "Un encuentro inesperado" clarify and separate-out "the mythical," a facet of highland culture and cosmology historically (mis)appropriated by those writing and inscribing for/from afar.[19] Huaripaucar effectively divorces "the mythical" from Conflict violences, placing his *qarqachas* in an unexceptional present. In the context of this quotidian present, the harm they may inflict is minimal at best, just as their presence

does nothing to coopt popular Ayacucho-as-inferno imaginaries. Stripped of their association with the archaic and the antimodern, the *qarqachas* of "¿Miedoso yo?" and "Un encuentro inesperado" re-enter post/Conflict Ayacucho cultural frames as traditional figures that have nevertheless evolved into contemporaneity. That is, Huaripaucar's first-person Ayacuchan narrators drag the *qarqacha* back to its appropriate position within highland life, where it is not made to participate in the construction of apocalyptic representations nor reproduce hegemonic geo-racial imaginaries.

Returning to questions of plurality and multiplicity, we see that Huaripaucar's alternation of narrative registers further complicates and texturizes the unwieldy "esencia" the collection brings forth. Mirroring the (re)orienting and (re)presenting already enacted by Ayala Pérez and Cuadros, the collection's second half further pluralizes an assemblage of narratives that self-consciously exceed and evade classification. Moving outward towards new orientations while unabashedly severing ties to dominant, racialized imaginings, Huaripaucar's stories contribute to the construction of an Andean "esencia" defined only by its antihegemonic plurality.

Conclusions

With my examination of *Siete cuentos sin fin,* I have attempted to trace the ways in which the featured Ayacuchan authors and editors establish alternative orientations towards and (re)presentations of the highlands. Reading their work as a partial rebuttal to essentializing, exotifying inscriptions of Ayacucho imagined for/from afar, I argue that each contributor responds with a self-consciously antihegemonic "plurality" (Daly 6). This "plurality" has the effect of undoing and "untangling" (Gómez-Barris 11) racialized renderings of Ayacuchan geographies, while simultaneously (re)presenting subjectivities inextricably tied to those geographies. Moreover, I propose that the collection's conflictive positionality vis-à-vis coastal literary establishment and alternative orientations towards the highlands evidence a breaking with normative representational repertoires and a crafting of important "counterpublics" (Warner).

Such is especially the case given the self-conscious "literarity" of *Siete cuentos*: Ayala Pérez, Cuadros, and Huaripaucar all present the short narratives featured in the collection as Literature. Their stories, therefore, may not be read as pure ethnography, *testimonio,* or "folk art." I underscore the self-conscious literarity of the project due to the glaring lack of scholarship—both within Peru and beyond—that seriously interrogates the post-Conflict *literary* production of provincial subjects. While entire volumes have been devoted to the analysis of provincial *testimonio,* artwork, and song relating to Conflict violences, most of these studies lack any mention of the region's vibrant literary production.[20]

This surely responds to a desire to examine the cultural production of the war's most numerous victims—that is, Quechua-speaking highlanders, the majority of whom are without access to local literary organizations and publishing collectives. Nevertheless, the absence of scholarship relating to similarly localized post-Conflict literature has the effect of rehearsing and reinforcing the very dynamics decried by Amartí and the AEDA. To put it simply, scholarly emphasis on *other* cultural forms—here, regional film, "folk art," song, *retablo*, etc.—gives the false impression of a strict dichotomy between the literary, lettered practices of *limeño* authors, and the less-than-lettered, "othered" practices of Conflict victims. Crucially, this same lettered-unlettered dichotomy is at the very heart of Peru's most divisive geo-racial imaginaries.

While the present article seeks to contribute a much-needed analysis of local, post-Conflict literary production, the materiality of *Siete cuentos* already challenges the very dynamics I describe above. While the plural, antihegemonic orientations and (re)presentations set forth by Cuadros and Huaripaucar are noteworthy in and of themselves, it is the AEDA/Amartí's marrying of discourse and materiality that most reflects the "avant-garde" nature of their collective literary project. Much like the early twentieth-century magazine culture that launched *revistas* like the Puno-based *Boletín Titikaka,* the antihegemonic thrust of *Siete cuentos* owes much to critical overlaps of content and form. The collection's movement through hyper-local networks—networks that the authors and editors themselves trace—not only challenges dominant publics, representations, and imaginaries but also the primacy of *limeño* literary establishments in and of themselves. That is, with *Siete cuentos*, the Cuadros, Huaripaucar, and the AEDA/Amartí establish alternative, "plural" discourses, publics, and publishing practices that situate them outside of hegemonic literary circuits altogether. Whereas dominant logics posit large-scale publishing houses—both Peruvian and transnational—and *limeño* literary scenes as aspirational institutions, *Siete cuentos* suggests that the community of individuals responsible for its production deliberately casts its gazes elsewhere. "Looking elsewhere," in this case, means both "writing back" to and, quite literally, subverting Lima-centric literary practices, particularly those implemented in the wake of the nation's Internal Armed Conflict.

Notes

[1] This article is a research publication funded by Brown University's Center for Latin American and Carribean Studies and the Joukowsky Institute.

[2] Sommer uses Mario Vargas Llosa's unsuccessful run for the Peruvian presidency in 1990 as a prime example of the extent to which writers of the "Boom generation" mirrored the political engagement and "nation making" activities of nineteenth-century authors (5).

[3] According to the Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación's *Informe final*, 75% of the war's casualties were speakers of Quechua or other indigenous languages – this with only 20 percent of Peru's total population identifying as speakers of Quechua – and 85 percent hailed from rural communities lacking regular access to urban centers (159-61). Despite the immense suffering experienced in the highlands, it was not until the war reached urban areas – and, principally, Lima – that Conflict violence entered broader public consciousness.

[4] To be clear, here I refer not only to the rise of Sendero Luminoso, but also the Peruvian State's equally violent counter-insurgency strategies, as well as the government's general failure to address these underlying conditions in the post-Conflict era.

[5] In Quechua, "aya kuchu" means "rincón de los muertos" or "morada del alma."

[6] Crucially, the department also served as the birthplace and strategic stronghold of Sendero Luminoso.

[7] Here I use "white(r)" as a means of recognizing the historic fluidity of race and whiteness in the Peruvian context. See Marisol de la Cadena's *Indigenous Mestizos: The Politics of Race and Culture in Cuzco, Peru, 1919-1991* (2000) for an excellent analysis of Peruvian "race making."

[7] As Sarah Radcliffe and Sallie Westwood elucidate in *Remaking the Nation: Place, Identity and Politics in Latin America* (1996), the sort of "socio-spatial power" that advances this racialized place-making belongs to a broader practice of spatial othering felt across Latin America: "The creation of a social space in which to express belonging and at the same time to define those which are 'Other' is the effect and practice of the socio-spatial power relations of the nation" (22-23).

[8]As Alberto Flores Galindo articulates, in the wake of Peru's Internal Armed Conflict, Ayacucho became synonymous not only with racial and ethnic otherness, but also with "terrorism," violence and illegality (241): "'Shining Path' became 'terrorist,' which later became synonymous with 'Ayacuchano,' which in turn meant anything that was Indian or mestizo, dressed poorly, and spoke deficient Spanish" (Flores Galindo 240).

[9] "El patrón de la dominación entre los colonizadores y los otros, fue organizado y establecido sobre la base de la idea de 'raza' con todas sus implicaciones sobre la perspectiva histórica de las relaciones entre los diversos tipos de la especie humana" (Quijano 139).

[10] Here and throughout, I will refer to this generation as "Ayacucho's generación de los hijos" in order to acknowledge the authors' generational situatedness and childhood experiences of armed conflict.

[11] Erika Cuadros is from Huancavelica, a department that closely borders Ayacucho. Nevertheless, her connection to Ayacuchan publishing houses and literary associations, as well as her close geographical proximity to the department, allows for her grouping among Ayacuchan authors. Moreover, Ayacucho has come to embody a floating signifier roughly equivalent to "violent highland territory," thus subsuming bordering department.

[12] Throughout this essay, I draw from Daly's definition of Andean plurality: "Plurality in the Andes reflects the myriad of ways that subjects orient themselves before the material world and, in turn, the way that materials orient them. In Peru and Bolivia, diverse subjects orient themselves before modernity in ways that extend beyond the difference between indigenous and nonindigenous and instead encapsulate much broader incremental differings among subjects. . . In other words, the Andes is plural, and there are plural orientations (bodies in relation to shared common objects or objectives) for which a politics concerned for the life of ecosystems emerges" (6-7)

[13] To this point, while discussing post/Conflict-era bestsellers with AEDA/Amartí associates at the 2019 Feria Internacional del Libro de Ayacucho (FILA), several individuals – entirely without prompting – referred to the work of Cueto and Roncagliolo as "basura total," both for their misrepresentation of Ayacucho and their highly racialized portrayals of Ayacuchans. Two others – again, without prompting – questioned how literature of such an "inferior" quality could have possibly won such prestigious literary prizes (Notes, 2019). In a more recent interview with Ayala Pérez (2021), the editor-director echoed these same sentiments, underscoring the failure of "national" literatures to adequately treat the Conflict and its relation to the highlands (Personal Interview).

[14] Cuadros is an educator who received her training at the Universidad San Cristóbal de Huamanga (UNSCH) and now works as a bilingual elementary school teacher in rural Huancavelica (Peru). Huaripaucar is a UNSCH-trained literary critic who serves as assistant editor at Amartí and principal collaborator at *Revista Lucanamarca*. Notably, Huaripaucar is the descendent of victims of the 1983 massacre at Lucanamarca (Ayacucho).

[15] While Cuadros and Huaripaucar unlikely self-identify as "Indigenous," they *could* be classified as being "of Indigenous ancestry" or, even, "ex-indígena" (García 135) due to their familial ties to Quechua highland cultures. That is, while their urban education and professional trajectories distance them from the sort of racism and violence experienced by the Conflict's most numerous victims – we cannot forget that, in the Peruvian context, education has incredible "social whitening" capabilities – this is not to say that they are "not Indigenous" nor, for that matter, removed from the cultural givens of their Quechua relatives. For this reason, I use the term "Indigenous" with caution here and throughout. As Marisol de la Cadena persuasively argues in *Indigenous Mestizos: The Politics of Race and Culture in Cuzco, Peru, 1919-1991* (2000) questions of "Indigenous" identity are immensely complicated in Peru, with individuals of Indigenous ancestry often choosing to self-identify as *mestizo* for a variety of reasons, not least among them the threat of discrimination. As José Antonio Lucero explains in *Struggles of Voice: The Politics of Indigenous Representation in the Andes* (2008), Peru lacks the sort of national, explicitly pro-indigenous political coalitions observed in neighboring Ecuador and Bolivia, nations in which "Indigenous identity" has become a powerful point of cohesion.

[16] "In articulating the animal's role as 'other' other, 'The Dialogue of the Dogs' should be read as disposing of certain foundational anthropocentric precepts that connected animality with libido, languagelessness, and an uncivilized state of nature" (54).

[17] On April 3, 1983, Sendero Luminoso launched a planned massacre of the highland village of Lucanamarca (Ayacucho), an attack that would claim the lives of 69 community members (Comisión de la Verdad y la Reconciliación).

[18] Briefly, Huaripaucar's third story, "La última captura," adopts this same first narrative register and applies a comparable series of strategies of dis/reorientation. Once again employing the second person singular, the author invites – really, forces – his reader to share in the guilt and unease of an adolescent who participates in the capture of a Sendero militant. Joining the crusade of a local *ronda campesina,* the reader-protagonist is left unnerved by the group's activities and the impending execution of their captive. Placed in the body of the uneasy *rondero*, the reader moves through the highlands fueled by compassion rather than – as "epic" wartime narratives would have it – bloodlust, provoking an alternative orientation towards Ayacuchan "warzones." Thus, the violence of the *ronderos* is made foreign to the territories the reader-protagonist traverses, with the second-person narrator denaturalizing Lima-emanating imaginaries that posit Ayacucho as a dystopia to be razed.

[19] See Mary Weismantel's *Cholas and Pishtacos: Stories of Race and Sex in the Andes* (2003) for a detailed analysis of the racial and sexual imaginaries that underpin popular renderings of mythical creatures, particularly in relation to whiteness and the control of "white" territories.

[20] Víctor Vich's *Poéticas del duelo: ensayos sobre arte, memoria y violencia política en el Perú* (2017) and Cynthia Milton's *Art from a Fractured Past: Memory and Truth Telling in Post-Shining Path Peru* (2014) are two prominent examples of this trend. Both volumes seek-out the "other" truths of Conflict victims and witnesses, but do so via an examination of visual art, song, and oral testimony. Anne Lambright's *Andean Truths: Transitional Justice, Ethnicity, and Cultural Production in Post-Shining Path Peru* (2015) – which focuses almost entirely on representation of Ayacucho – similarly aligns highland perspectives with the oral or the visual. Her monograph does include a chapter on Óscar Colchado Lucio's *Rosa Cuchillo* (1996), but the novel's uptake by Lima-based performance group Yuyachkani and subsequent circulation within coastal literary circuits distinguish it from the sort of literary production explored in the present chapter. Mark R. Cox has worked extensively within and around highland literary circuits, producing an extensive annotated bibliography of Conflict-related texts that includes authors from "outside" of hegemonic networks of production and exchange. Nevertheless, his impressive efforts and multiple monographs reflect a more sociological approach to documenting local literary responses to armed conflict, leaving much room for a more detailed reading of individual texts. Juan Carlos Ubilluz's, Alexandra Hibbett's and Víctor Vich's *Contra el sueño de los injustos: la literatura peruana ante la violencia política* (2009) does treat the "literarity" of texts from provincial literary circuits, considering how each work contests "official" discourses. Nevertheless, all of the provincial authors considered in their volume both belong to "la generación de 1980" and, to varying degrees, have come to be recognized as provincial literary "elites."

Works Cited

AEDA-"Asociación de Escritores de Ayacucho." About information. *Facebook, https://www.facebook.com/aeda.ayacucho.* Accessed 3 Jan. 2022.

Ayala Pérez, Luis Eduardo. "4 Con Luis Ayala y la gesta de editar en Ayacucho." *Confluencias Culturales,* 8 Mar. 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7G6F6ctC3kY&t=1209s. Accessed 3 Aug. 2021.

---. "Ayacucho tiene la suerte de tener grandes poetas y escritores." *Jornada,* 16 Apr. 2021, https://jornada.com.pe/cultural/item/2359-entrevista-ayacucho-tiene-la-suerte-de-tener-grandes-poetas-y-escritores. Accessed 1 Aug. 2021.

---. "Encuentro con Luis Eduardo Ayala Pérez." *Ahora,* no. 5792, pp. 10.

---. Interview. By Tess Renker. 13 Aug. 2021.

---. "Presentación." *Siete cuentos sin fin,* Colectivo Cultural Amartí, 2015.

Beusterien, John. *Canines in Cervantes and Velázquez: An Animal Studies Reading of Early Modern Spain*. Routledge, 2013.

Comisión de la Verdad y la Reconciliación. *Informe final.* CVR, 2003.

Cox, Mark R. "Apuntes para el estudio de la narrativa peruana desde 1980 y la violencia política." *Pachaticray (el mundo al revés): Testimonios y ensayos sobre la violencia política y la cultura peruana desde 1980*, edited by Mark R. Cox, Editorial San Marcos, 2004, pp. 67-76.

Cuadros, Erika and Livio Huaripaucar. *Siete cuentos sin fin.* Colectivo Cultural Amartí, 2015.

Cueto, Alonso. *La hora azul.* Anagrama, 2005.

de la Cadena, Marisol. *Indigenous Mestizos: The Politics of Race and Culture in Cuzco, Peru*, 1919-1991. Duke UP, 2000.

Daly, Tara. *Beyond Human: Vital Materialisms in the Andean Avant-Gardes*. Bucknell UP, 2019.

Editorial Amartí. Editorial launch announcement. *Facebook,* May 13, 2013, https://www.facebook.com/literatura.unsch/posts/380755665367562. Accessed 24 December 2020.

Flores Galindo, Alberto. *In Search of an Inca: Identity and Utopia in the Andes*. Cambridge UP, 2010.

García, María Elena. *Making Indigenous Citizens: Identities, Education, and Multicultural Development in Peru*. Stanford UP, 2005.

Gómez-Barris, Macarena. *The Extractive Zone.* Duke UP, 2017.

Honeyman, Susan. *Elusive Childhood: Impossible Representations in Modern Fiction.* The Ohio State UP, 2005.

Johns, Adrian. *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making.* The University of Chicago Press, 1998.

Lambright, Anne. *Andean Truths: Transnational Justice, Ethnicity, and Cultural Production in Post-Shining Path Peru.* Liverpool UP, 2015.

Lucero, José Antonio. *Struggles of Voice: The Politics of Indigenous Representation in the Andes.* University of Pittsburg Press, 2008.

Milton, Cynthia. *Art from a Fractured Past: Memory and Truth-Telling in Post-Shining Path Peru.* Duke UP, 2014.

Quijano, Aníbal. "Colonialidad del poder, cultura y conocimiento en América Latina." *Dispositio,* vol. 24, no. 51, 1999, pp. 137-48.

Radcliffe, Sarah, and Sallie Westwood. *Remaking the Nation: Place, Identity, and Politics in Latin America.* Routledge, 1996.

Roncagliolo, Santiago. *Abril Rojo.* Punto de Lectura, 2007.

Sommer, Doris. *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America*. University of California Press, 1993.

Ubilluz, Juan Carlos, et al. *Contra el sueño de los justos*. Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 2009.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. *Lituma en los Andes*. GeoPlaneta Editorial S.A., 1993.
Vich, Víctor. *Poéticas del duelo: Ensayos sobre arte, memoria y violencia política en el Perú*. Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 2017.
Warner, Michael. *Publics and Counterpublics*. Zone Books, 2005.
Weismantel, Mary. *Cholas and Pishtacos: Stories of Race and Sex in the Andes*. University of Chicago Press, 2001.