

Losing the *locus*, Recovering Ideologies: Displacements in Peruvian and Bolivian Literature of the Post-Cold War

Lorena Cuya Gavilano

Abstract

This article explores how post–Cold War Andean narratives revive ideological and mythological beliefs in response to displacement, highlighting the liminal, transnational nature of Andean migratory literature and the fluidity of the concept of “andinidad.”

I had no nation now but the imagination.
[...]

I met History once, but he ain't recognize me
Derek Walcott¹

The theme of this article is territorial dislocation and ideological relocations in post-Cold War Andean literature. Drawing from Walcott's verses, this piece explores not only how and why the loss of a nation in a geopolitical sense—whether within or beyond its borders—has been depicted through the re-generation or revision of memories, myths, and ideologies in the Andes. It also explores how such ‘imaginations’ reveal non-dogmatic ideological realignments during a period marked

¹ Fr. Derek Walcott's poem “Shabine Leaves the Republic” in *The Schooner Flight*.

by armed and unarmed social movements in Peru and Bolivia. At the same time, while Walcott's indictment of history highlights the negation of Black populations by a hegemonic version of history, I would like to focus in a somehow opposite process.

I focus in how Andean migrants' recognition of their own history and beliefs highlights local epistemologies that bestow them with a new sense of gravitas in the absence of a place.² Such a recognition gives them back a historical *locus*. The use of specific myths and ideologies reveals the recuperation of localized epistemologies, questioning ideological alliances beyond right- and left-wing economic and political agendas. In doing so, these narratives represent complex Andean subjectivities and tensions at the turn of the century. They portray subjects positioned beyond decolonial liberation, irretrievable from neoliberal practices, and whose sense of identity is, nonetheless, still drawn from their lost locations.

While the Cold War is conventionally defined as a period of global political and military tension between the USA and the USSR from roughly 1947 to 1989/1991,³ the post-Cold War should be understood as the period that follows (Bystrom et al. 4–5).⁴ The development of capitalism in its neoliberal form and the fight for democracy became economic and political pillars in the period after 1989/1991. In the Andes, in particular, the post-Cold War period coincides with a series of crises unleashed by neoliberal agendas, including terrorist wars, the consequences of the Washington Consensus, the rise and fall of pink waves, social movements, and ensuing brown waves, and peripheral fascism.⁵ Massive displacements, both internal and external,

² By "Andean", here, I refer to both the mestizo and indigenous populations from what are known as Andean countries, in this particular case, Bolivia and Peru.

³ 1989 marks the fall of the Berlin Wall and 1991 marks the end of the USSR, symbols of the world divide between capitalist and soviet communist forces after WWII.

⁴ Once the the big revolutions were quenched throughout the world so were people's hopes for change. For instance, Tiananmen Square protests in 1989, the perversion of the Castro regime in Cuba, the Tlatelolco massacre in 1968, Czechoslovakia's Velvet Revolution before the end of 1989, and Poland's Solidarność in 1980 among many other movements were ended and their end was sealed with the symbolic fall of the Berlin wall.

⁵ Brown wave' or 'brown tide' refer to the color associated with the rise of fascism in Europe during the interwar period (Toland 259). Recently, Stahler-Sholk, Richard, et al. and Oliveira have used the



Lorena Cuya Gavilano, “Losing the *locus*, Recovering Ideologies: Displacements in Peruvian and Bolivian Literature of the Post-Cold War,” *New Area Studies* 5:2 (2026).

followed. There was a feeling of urgency to fight for equality and cultural recognition and, moreover, to fight for equality through cultural recognition.

Such urgency for cultural acknowledgment has undeniably left an imprint on recent literary productions. Peruvian and Bolivian narratives published in the post-Cold War period allude to political and economic rearrangements resulting in land dislocations and the subsequent repossession of indigenous beliefs and historical recuperation. Stories like *Los nuevos juguetes de la guerra fría* (2015) and Antoine Rodríguez-Carmona’s *El blues del minibús* (2015) work with the reimagination of history and myths for an epistemological re-edification and a relational ontology regardless of the place of enunciation—a ‘place’ not in the standard sense of delineated national borders, but something more like a placeless nation or a nation beyond borders. They exemplify secular forms of citizenship and the reimagination of a borderless national identity.

The selected works evidence an inescapable sense of continuity despite Andean peoples’ displacements and a sense of affiliation through multiple struggles. But ‘how’ such stories of migration ought to be thought? and how should they be theorized? Given the publication of this special issue, how could critics see such de-localized stories in the context of new Area Studies or a national canon, when the idea of any ‘area’ keeps steadily blurring and migrant authors have one or more nationalities? What follows explores, first, the nature and complexity that post-Cold War agendas add to Andean literatures in a context of sociocultural and demographic mobilizations. Next, this article discusses the ways in which Area Studies are challenged by narratives of migration and dislocated Andean authors. The article, then, examines the selected corpus, and ends with a discussion on its implications for literary criticism in the region, and for Area Studies more generally.

Falling Walls, Border Crossings, Raising Memories

The fall of the Berlin wall represented the end of an epoch and an opportunity to cross borders not just in Europe but also in the Global South. In the Andean region, literary portrayals of large-scale displacements have foregrounded socio-political reckonings

expressions to differentiate the pink tide from the new far-right administrations in Latin America. See their works in the bibliography.

and cultural recognitions as gestures of a *decolonial delinking*.⁶ But such narratives not only articulated notions of cultural identity in conjunction with local histories, they have evidenced the tensions of incorporating neoliberal ideologies in the current construction of localized stories as well, especially in the post-Cold War period.⁷

If the cultural Cold War was a 'truly global overlooked phenomenon' (Hammond 4), so was the cultural post-Cold War, and even more so, the study of Andean literature within the framework of the post-Cold War. Just a decade ago, Adam Piette was one of the first literary scholars to challenge assumptions that the Cold War's literature was mainly Euro-North American (Hammond 3–4).⁸ Although there have been a wide range of responses to bipolar interventionism by local mestizo and indigenous writers in South America, South Asia and Africa, they have garnered critical attention only recently. Paraphrasing Andrew Hammond, African agitprop, Latin American testimonio, South-East Asian war poetry, eastern European samizdat, Maoist theatre and Soviet socialist realism, autobiography and travel writing represent a stream of publications on non-North American Cold War cultures in the last three decades (4–5). Andean literatures, though, have not received the same attention. Their transnational character is, however, evident when looked at through the lens of the post-Cold War world and industrial modernization.

In the Global South intellectual coalitions emerged as a response to the Cold War period. The Bandung Conference fostered Afro-Asian alliances propelled by decolonization movements, and the ensuing tricontinentalism extended the 'Bandung

⁶ *Delinking* implies a liberation of independent thinking and real conditions of equality that must not fit under previous modes of social organization imposed on us (Mignolo 36–38).

⁷ Such migration literature would include, for example, Peruvian works such as Rosa Cuchillo (1997) by Óscar Colchado, Santiago Roncagliolo's *Abril rojo*. Alfaguara, 2006, Francisco Ángeles's *Adiós a la revolución* (2019), Rafael Dumett's *El camarada Jorge y el dragón* (2023), or Bolivian narratives such as Juan Pablo Piñeiro's *Cuando Sara Chura despierte*, Alison Spedding's *De cuando en cuando Saturnina* (2004), Raimundo Quispe Flores's *Ciudad apacheta* (2023) among many others.

⁸ Also see Ann Douglas, who discusses the failures of cultural critics to appreciate the historical context of postmodernity and postcoloniality as coterminous with the Cold War and the literary Post-Cold War.

spirit' to Latin America (Bystrom et al. 5–6).⁹ Such orientations stimulated intellectual connections through literature, philosophy, film, theatre, political activism, and so on. Anibal Quijano's ideas on the decoloniality of power, Gustavo Gutierrez's liberation theology, Pablo González Casanova's and Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui's internal colonialism, or Paulo Freyre's decolonial education exemplify some of those connexions.

In this context, Latin American literary productions played crucial ideological roles during the Cold War and post-Cold War periods. As is well known, Latin American Boom authors (1960s–1970s)—at home and abroad—were initially pro-Cuban and radically anti-imperialist. Meanwhile, post-Boom authors (1980s–1990s) renounced exuberant and magical views of Latin America as a counterhegemonic strategy, but simultaneously embraced economic globalization on their own terms. Post-Boom authors resorted to transnational forms of publication to further circulate and sell their books without ceasing to insist on their own cultural experiences as a historical precondition for their aesthetic development.¹⁰

Bolivian and Peruvian migration literatures of the post-Cold War—roughly situated in the late 1990s and the first two decades of the 2000s—are, conversely, neither pro-Cuban, nor radically anti-imperialist. This literature has neither renounced the recuperation of traditional beliefs as a counterhegemonic strategy, nor completely embraced globalization. Instead, this literature simultaneously points to the resilience of displaced people, as well as the need to reformulate official economies, governments, and narratives. Their economic positions in terms of the publishing industries are neither dogmatic, nor cynical but pragmatic: they publish from where they are—this point, though, deserves further examination.

⁹ I adopt a broader understanding of Tricontinentalism, referring not only to the Tricontinental Conference held in 1966, which focused on anti-colonial and anti-imperial issues during the Cold War era, but also to the tricontinental spirit and affective transcontinental solidarity and alliances that sprang from it. See Garland.

¹⁰ See the works of Neil Larsen, Tulio Halperín, and Jean Franco for a more detail review of these issues.



Lorena Cuya Gavilano, "Losing the *locus*, Recovering Ideologies: Displacements in Peruvian and Bolivian Literature of the Post-Cold War," *New Area Studies* 5:2 (2026).

By recreating non-hegemonic histories and myths, migrant authors and those writing about the migratory experience destabilize the borders of national literatures and citizenship while elevating the role of those once deemed unworthy of historical participation. They reflect the stories of those who, being outside official national narratives and systems of progress and production, are now reclaiming their place in history. In any case, the fictionalization of Andean migrant experiences tries to make sense of the migrants' beliefs not as determined in geopolitical terms, but rather as bounded by a spirit of *communitas*, to use Victor Turner's term. *Communitas* ostensibly goes beyond national organizations, 'it gives a sense of togetherness through beliefs and rituals' and, in this case, through mnemonic reconstructions as well (Turner 94-113). The subsequent destabilization of cultural borders urges us to explore this distinct literary corpus.

Unbound

Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui has criticized the fact that many Cultural Studies departments, Area Studies included, in North American universities have incorporated postcolonial and decolonial studies into their curricula but without the urgency and political vitality animating the work of intellectuals from India and the global south (*Ch'ixinakax* 57). In doing so, she criticizes a bare culturalist and academicist orientation that have risked becoming institutionalized gesticulations and academic rituals obscuring rather than confronting the colonial histories they claimed to address. Such approaches would not only be deprived of the political and ethical urgency brought forth by the work of subaltern(ized) intellectuals. They would also face the pressures from regional dislocations and be interrogated by the contributions of immigrant intellectuals within North American academia and the works of deterritorialized authors.

The preoccupation for specific 'areas' to be studied, in a way, fell apart when globalization and immigration make the location of cultures and authors more difficult. Towards the turn of the century, Latin American studies, 'which had always been mindful of the United States as a dominant factor, began to emphasize space as flow, as liminal, as transnational' (McClennen 174). Vicente Rafael has called that phenomenon the 'immigrant imaginary, which calls into question the integrationist

logic inherent in liberal conceptions of Area Studies' (98). In the same vein, Alberto Moreiras has stressed the fact that Area Studies have never been antiglobal (90). They have always had a political and economic agenda. In fact, 'since the end of World War II, Area Studies have been integrated into larger institutional networks, ranging from universities to foundations, that have made possible the reproduction of a North American style of knowing' (Vicente 91) with the non-secret goal of consolidating its geopolitical and economic dominance.

Put it differently, while Area Studies' goals may or may not have changed in the post-Cold War period, its nature have been destabilized by the conflictive convergence of globalization, neoliberalism, and migrations. What calls my attention in this context is Rivera Cusicanqui's sense of 'urgency'. Specially, in an era of seemingly covert bipolar confrontations, where could the political vitality of intellectuals from the Andean region be identified and how exactly?¹¹ Moreover, whose views are these intellectuals reproducing? Can Area Studies today mediate if not empower the standpoints of those inhabiting unstable 'areas'? How the selected corpus, for instance, may (or not) expose any form of political and ethical urgency, or perhaps just deception?

Much in the same way that Andean studies are inundated by questions of *andeanity* and indigeneity within the Andean region, national literatures from Andean countries are interrogated by the immigrant imagination. Central to such a vision is the preoccupation with 'what' and 'how' stories of displacements talk about the nation amidst global neoliberalization and the dismantling of social and geopolitical borders. Maybe, the problem is that despite being cognoscente of the oppositional and fixed ways framing these issues, the focus has been mostly nostalgic and dogmatic. It has been nostalgic in the sense that an idealized past, untouched by colonization and globalization, has never guaranteed either unity or equality. And it has been dogmatic

¹¹ The economic, military, and technological competition between US-capitalist and former communist blocks has become even more palpable in recent years as seen in the war in Ukraine, the race to generate the first SARS-CoV-2 vaccines, the control of seaports like Chancay in Peru, or the competition for grain and oil production involving Latin American countries like Argentina, Brazil, and Venezuela.



Lorena Cuya Gavilano, “Losing the *locus*, Recovering Ideologies: Displacements in Peruvian and Bolivian Literature of the Post-Cold War,” *New Area Studies* 5:2 (2026).

in the sense that colonization and globalization have always been considered primarily as antagonists to local histories. It is important to acknowledge, however, that while many recent cultural productions represent a tremendous contestation of external impositions in the Andean region, there is evidence that show a simultaneous and contentious incorporation of neoliberal principles into local beliefs.

Narratives like *Los nuevos juguetes de la guerra fría* and Antoine Rodríguez-Carmona’s *El blues del minibús*, for instance, expose a range of identitarian symbols bound up with indigenous epistemological and capitalist views of modernity. They show that the Andean world today is capitalist and modern, a combination that reproduces irretrievable forms of violence. As Ximena Soruco Sologuren notes, the assumption that the indigenous past and a capitalist present are set apart is simply unsustainable (30). On the one hand, the migration of indigenous and *cholo* populations to different cities indicates their participation in a neoliberal economy and an urban modernity. On the other, migrants’ actualization of their old beliefs or historical recuperation symbolizes a contestation to the structural pressures of a post-Cold War organization after the enactment of neoliberal reforms that neglected local interests and knowledges, as well as people’s sense of collectivity as explained below.

Migrants and the Prophecies of Change

Bolivia has not only endured colonial and neoliberal efforts to erase its pre-Hispanic worldview but has also faced the failure of the 1952 Revolution, which aimed to vindicate indigenous rights. It has also gone through a series of social upheavals—some successful, others not—always keeping the idea of an Incan return alive. This return is not just an expression of their cultural heritage, but also, and perhaps more importantly, a sign of resistance and resilience. As a literary imprint, for instance, Antoine Rodríguez-Carmona’s *El blues del minibús* translates the political and cultural theme of the Inca’s return into images of rural migrants reclaiming the cityscape—synecdochally, the country.

In depicting thousands of indigenous migrants arriving in the city, *El blues del minibús* echoes the unexpected consequences of inadequate economic changes. Its stories symbolize transformations brought about by internal migrants as fundamental factors

in the configuration of new social spaces, and in the constitution of a pluricultural nation in neoliberal times. His narratives reflect a pro-*cholo* (pro-indigenous, pro-mestizo) discourse, portraying rural migrations as the comeback of indigenous forces and as the advent of new socio-economic actors.¹² It is important to consider here that Rodríguez-Carmona is himself a migrant and his geographic passage to Bolivia entails a unique understanding of migration post-Cold War. Sponsored by European universities, he arrived in Bolivia to study the role of development cooperation agencies and their impact on the fight against poverty.¹³ Originally from Spain, the author nationalized Bolivian in 2013 after living there for more than a decade. Surely, his condition may raise eyebrows, but his non-dogmatic writings built upon his experience as a transnational citizen and portray tense dialogues among new socioeconomic actors, reflecting a constant confrontation of diverse voices (Cuya Gavilano 232). His work *El Blus* allegorized an indigenous return defiant of both colonial structures and the economic pressures of the world’s bipolarism.

The notion of return has been linked to different figures and ideologies in the Andes. The Pachakuti refers to a process of cyclical destruction and regeneration. The Inkarrí represents the corporeal regrowth and historical recuperation of a messianic figure.¹⁴ The rebellions of Tupac Amaru in Peru and the Katari brothers—Tomás, Nicolás and Dámaso—in Bolivia during the eighteenth century ended with the promise of the

¹² The *cholo* became the embodiment of a new social group: Andean in origins, but culturally and economically urbanized and Westernized.

¹³ See Cuya Gavilano p. 233.

¹⁴ The Inkarrí is associated with historical figures like Atahualpa and Tupac Amaru, but cannot be reduced to any of them. In some versions of the myth, Inkarrí is an Inka deity, a son of the sun, captured and quartered by the Catholic God in a cosmic dispute (López-Baralt 45). Different versions concur in pointing out that after his dismemberment, Inkarrí’s head awaits the reconstitution of his body (Arguedas and Pineda 219–30; López-Baralt 47; Graziano 189; Ossio xi–xiv; Pease, Prólogo lxxxi). Similarly, for the Incas and many modern Andeans, Pachakuti signifies the periodical renovation that comes between ages or “suns” (Graziano 39), the “revolt of time-space” (Rivera Cusicanqui, “De Tupac” 65–67). “At the end of each world, the Sun disappears, all is overturned, and then a new world is born” (Ribeiro 167). Moreover, to this day Tupac Katari’s dismemberment also has a symbolic importance in the notion of Andean revolution and renovation. His sacrifice and legendary promise of return—“Volveré y seré millones”—endures in political movements such as the Movimiento Indio Tupaj Katari (MITKA) and the Movimiento Revolucionario Tupaj Katari (MRTKL).

leaders' subversive reappearance (Pulido Herráez and Huamán 13; Graziano 130–31). The Tupac Katari rebellion concluded with the hero's dismemberment. Yet, it challenged the stability of the colonial order and prophesied a new beginning: 'Volveré y seré millones' ('I will be back and be millions') is Katari's ideological assurance of cultural vindication (Monasterios, 'Unexpected' 337). The Katarista ideology is of particular importance in Bolivia and there have been several iterations of the original Katarista movement. To this day, their members, who identify themselves as 'Indians' in its majority, have expressed their disillusion with old and current economic structures.

In literary expressions like *El Blues*, the allegorical return of the Inca symbolizes, on one hand, the continuation of Katarista ideology. It stands as a promise of political and cultural inclusion for millions of indigenous migrant populations. On the other hand, though, Rodríguez-Carmona's stories also represent migrants as new actors who, formally and informally, participate in neoliberal economic practices, yet maintain and respect their traditional cultural practices.

The *minibús* represents an alternative space for sociocultural dialogue among migrants, mestizos, Aymaras, Karas (white people), *cholitas*, former revolutionaries, and bureaucrats. Their conversations debunk Westernized forms of power-knowledge at a time when an 'alud de humanidad' ('human landslide') has fallen upon La Paz.¹⁵ For reasons of space, I mainly comment on the opening story 'Profecía' ['Prophecy'], which frames the entire collection.

'Profecía' begins like this:

Cuando el indio desfile por el Prado a cuatro ruedas, [...] cuando el indio levante el báculo y las polleras aten sus alas como mariposas en la Asamblea Plurinacional, entonces la cordillera se estremecerá en un big bang andino y un ejército de minibuses avanzará flamante por las pampas [...] bailando al

¹⁵ In "La forma multitud de la política de las necesidades vitales," Raquel Rodríguez, Álvaro Garía Linera, and Luis Tapia describe "el alud de humanidad" as a metaphor for the social movements and migrations reshaping the Bolivian sociopolitical landscape.

son de quenás y zampoñas [...]. Son miles [...]. Llegarán a poblar la faz del altiplano y circular por las calles [...] por el Prado desfilará el indio minibusero y la ciudad vestirá para recibirlo sus mejores galas, su segunda piel metálica. (Rodríguez-Carmona, *El Blues* 9–10)

The advent of the *minibús* is more than the metaphor for the arrival of thousands of indigenous migrants from the countryside in the city. It is the manifestation of their power and influence in the country's socioeconomic reorganization. Their massive entrance in the cityscape occurs in tandem with their insertion into the neoliberal market of public transportation and private initiative.

The vision of thousands of minibuses as vehicles of social mobility exemplifies one way in which migrants have reshaped the social scene and gained their status as a new working class. In part, the *minibus* incursion echoes the promise of change symbolized by the election of the first indigenous-migrant president, Evo Morales (2006-2019), and the faith in the Katarista prophecy: to return and be thousands. Commercially, though, the organization of people around informal economic activities signals their simultaneous oppression. In Bolivia, as well as in Peru, migrants' informal economy has been a response to the eternal bureaucracy of a legal system that only granted membership to those who already had economic and political agency. Yet, a blind acceptance or shallow celebration of such informality does not empower people—as writer Mario Vargas Llosa and economist Hernando de Soto contend in *El Otro Sendero*.¹⁶ Instead, the recognition of migrant populations as a new formal working class is needed, and Rodríguez-Carmona's story seems to hint at this.

Put differently, in a post-Cold War economy owning a *minibus* became a sign of economic progress and announced new forms of belonging to a nation-state even if the entrance was informal and chaotic. 'Profecía' describes indigenous populations'

¹⁶ Mario Vargas wrote the prologue to the second edition of *El Otro Sendero* by de Soto. The book explains how informal economic activities became a dominating presence in Peru as the result of the state's inability to facilitate access to regulations regarding property rights and business initiatives. De Soto's argument, however, is bereft of an explanation for the sociocultural consequences keeping vulnerable populations on the margins of legality and real social participation.

social and economic resourcefulness in a new urban modern centre. 'Volveré y seré millones. Se multiplicarán como hormigas' (11), says the omniscient narrator of the story. Their drivers will occupy the sites from where the church, the state, and the central bank exert their power. 'Ocuparán las plazas para asombro de los vecinos, que se quedarán mirando nomás a ese gremio metálico que se la pasa bailando. [...] Junto lo antiguo y lo nuevo' (10). In a society fractured by socialist and capitalist divides, many indigenous migrants have been displaced and re-constituted into a new social group with legitimate access to political and economic activities—hence, (re)taking the church, the state, and the bank.

Similarly, in 'Herederos del neoliberalismo' ('Heirs of Neoliberalism'), Rodríguez-Carmona further explains how the *minibus* business represents a new migrant's vision of social mobility. There, the narrator explains:

Herederos del neoliberalismo, los minibuses representaban el triunfo de la iniciativa privada en el sector de transporte y ese negocio de cuatro ruedas se había convertido en símbolo de ascenso social en la ciudad, así como de las aspiraciones de cambio que pretendían, en los discursos oficiales, enterrar las políticas neoliberales. (Rodríguez-Carmona 110)

It is no coincidence that, for decades now, owning a minibus has become a 'vehicle' for economic progress or, at the very least, economic sustenance. Owning this form of transportation aligns with and represents adaptation to the second wave of neoliberal reforms implemented during the presidency of Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada (1993–1997). These reforms followed the recommendations of the World Bank and led the country toward a 'much-bruited 'capitalization' scheme to sell off half of state-owned entities—hydrocarbons were the foremost prize, but after them were electricity, railroads, airlines, and communications' (Thomson 504). Such changes eliminated price controls and facilitated the dismissal of stable workers. Consequently, '[u]nemployment levels rose to over 20 percent and underemployment to 60 percent, and life in the proliferating 'informal' sectors was highly precarious' (505). Moreover, after Bolivia underwent the so-called 'shock therapy' in 1985, the neoliberal reorganization of the economy accelerated migration to cities and abroad.

Seeking to be part of the nascent neoliberal project, Bolivia adopted structural reforms and economic actions concerted by the so-called Washington Consensus (Restrepo 132), ignoring local interests and knowledges, as well as people's sense of collectivity. Yet, simultaneously, the arrival of thousands of migrants to the capital—as a centre of economic and political power—allegorically represent a fulfilled prophecy: that native populations throughout Bolivia will retake control of the socioeconomic and cultural organization of the country. Amidst these tensions, the election of the first migrant and indigenous president, and the writing of the new Bolivian constitution of 2009 crystalized the new economic realities and cultural tensions experienced in Bolivia. Beyond being aligned to right or left ideologies, what Bolivians continue is a fight for dignity and recognition, for a survival that has to *go over* and, at the same time, *live in* a world economic bipolarism. Concomitant to this struggle, especially for those destabilized because of their displacement, is the return of myths and the use of ancestral memory as a foundation for creating their own economic and cultural agendas.

A range of identitarian symbols bound up with indigenous epistemological and capitalist views of modernity are, thus, evident in Rodríguez-Carmona's work. Minibus drivers and owners saw their occupation as a means for economic progress. They experience the sense of empowerment—sometimes false or superficial—that private ownership offers. Bolivian coloniality is, thus, neoliberal and modern and has become another expression of what Rivera Cusicanqui has called *mestizaje 'ch'ixi'*. For her, '[l]a noción de *ch'ixi* . . . plantea la coexistencia en paralelo de múltiples diferencias culturales que no se funden, sino que antagonizan o se complementan. Cada una se reproduce a sí misma desde la profundidad del pasado y se relaciona con las otras de forma contenciosa' (*Ch'ixinakax* 70). In *El Blues*, such *ch'ixi* goes beyond racial and ethnic juxtapositions. It transpires through the description of socioeconomic practices constituted in the tension of indigenous beliefs and modern economic ideologies. It crystalizes in the return of indigenous peoples to the cities and evidences a direct response to the post-Cold War economic and cultural reorganization. Accounts such as *El Blues* highlight the ways in which migrants have

gone beyond the ongoing bipolarity in world economic politics, showing the paradoxical socioeconomic and cultural practices that result from it.

Migrants, The Cold War's New Toys

In Peru, like in Bolivia, tensions between the working classes (laborers, peasants, mestizos, and mostly indigenous populations) and the owners of capital (white and white mestizo elites mainly) have a long-lasting history. Such confrontations have built up over time and become more complex with the Washington-Moscow bipolarity post WWII. The USA's interventionism, stemming from its fear of and rivalry with the communist bloc, was promptly opposed by several revolutionary movements (Booth 1130-1132).¹⁷ The uprisings of people historically oppressed by the colonial system of castes, and now oppressed by the neoliberal economy, were easily foreseeable.

Already during the Cold War, Peru was the stage of several radical movements such as The Revolutionary Left Movement (Movimiento de la Izquierda Revolucionaria), a Marxist–Leninist group founded in 1962 by Luis de la Puente Uceda, The Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (Movimiento revolucionario Tupac Amaru, MRTA),¹⁸ a Marxist-Leninist guerrilla started in the early 1980s, and the Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso), which sustained a bloody war since the mid 1980s until 1992, when its leader Abimael Guzmán was captured.¹⁹ The group embraced the so-called Marxism–Leninism–Maoism and Gonzalo thought. Perhaps with the exception of *Adios Ayacucho* by Julio Ortega (1986) and *Rosa Cuchillo* by Óscar Colchado (1996), Peruvian literature did not engage with the terror and the subsequent displacements until years later. Among other authors, Santiago Roncagliolo, Alonso Cueto and Iván Thays began addressing the Shining Path conflict and its consequences in the early 2000s. Juan Manuel Robles's *Nuevos juguetes de la Guerra fría* appeared in 2015 and deals with the MRTA armed conflict and the displacements that followed.

¹⁷ See also Grandin in the bibliography.

¹⁸ The MRTA refers to the Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru founded in 1984, which participated in the armed conflict in Peru from the 1980s to the 2000s.

¹⁹ Sendero's origins, however, dated back to the late 1970s.



Lorena Cuya Gavilano, "Losing the *locus*, Recovering Ideologies: Displacements in Peruvian and Bolivian Literature of the Post-Cold War," *New Area Studies* 5:2 (2026).

Robles' semi-autobiographical novel acutely portrays the pro-Cuban influence on Peruvian intellectuals like the protagonist's father, and the lingering traces of the country's leftist struggle. The story explores how the political activities of a leftist middle-class family impact their son, Iván Morante. The young protagonist loves North American toys and music, he no longer believes in staying in his country to fight for a cause, any cause either individual or communal. He believes in crossing borders. As the dissatisfied son of former revolutionaries, the protagonist represents not only the failures of a revolution, but also the break with revolutionary ideals. In this sense, Robles's novel tells the story of a Peruvian migrant whose life is shaped by conflicting cultural narratives in the post-Cold War period.

Released in 2015, the book was published during the post-Cold War, but its story is set in two distinctive moments and locations: the childhood of the protagonist in the Bolivian capital La Paz during the early 1980s, and his early adulthood in New York during the first decade of the twenty-first century. It would only be after his migration to the Big Apple that Morante tries to reconstruct the story of his childhood.

While in Bolivia, his father, a leftist journalist working for the Cuban government, enrolled the little Morante in the *pioneer school* El Guerrillero Heroico (The Heroic Guerrilla Fighter) to educate him under the umbrella of communist-socialist ideals, in direct opposition to USA capitalist values. As it turns out, Morante will decide to migrate to no other place than the USA. During Iván's time at the pioneer school, the Cuban government allegedly tried to recover the remains of Che Guevara who was assassinated in the Bolivian jungle in 1967. Morante attempts to remember this episode after somebody notices his photograph dressed as a little pioneer hanging on the walls of his New York apartment. The event leads to a mnemonic reconstruction controlled by two pro-Cuban agents, Nuria and Saldaña, who are trying to collect materials for a new museum of the Cuban Revolution. They believe that Morante witnessed the moment when other Cuban agents recovered Guevara's body and repatriated it to the island. They are also convinced that those agents utilized different techniques to distort Iván's memory and make him forget the event. For instance, after the little Morante discovers a box with human bones in the school's basement, employees from the Cuban government placed a skeleton in his classroom aiming to

make him believe that the human remains he saw belonged to that skeleton, not to Guevara's body. The novel is filled with similar examples of fabricated memories that the migrant confronts and reconstructs only after his second displacement to the USA.

In trying to reconstruct the story of Guevara's remains, the migrant's memory also evokes symbolic traces of daily ideological and cultural confrontations from left and right. Iván focuses on symbolic remnants of American television series and toys like *V: The Extraterrestrial Invasion*, *He-Man*, and *G.I. Joe*, which reveal the ideological contradictions of his childhood world. The young Morante believed that Santa returned every year for Christmas and that Tupac Amaru would come back for the long-awaited revival of the Andean world. One day, his grandfather told him the story of Tupac Amaru II—a tale worthy of a lengthy quote:

Mi padre siempre me dijo que debía sentirme afortunado de haber nacido el 4 de noviembre, pues ese era el día de la rebelión de Túpac Amaru II. Pero cuando le pedí que me hablara de Túpac Amaru II, se limitó a contarme que había sido un rebelde, alguien que luchó contra los españoles. '¿Qué le pasó?' Pregunté, murió valientemente, dijo. Nada más. Por eso, la siguiente vez que fui donde mi abuelo quise preguntárselo a él. . . . Yo había estado mirándolo desde el jardín donde jugaba con el muñeco de He-Man que mi madre me había regalado . . . 'Túpac Amaru II, José Gabriel Condorcanqui' soltó el pausadamente Mi abuelo me contó la historia de Túpac Amaru II, los 20000 indígenas en rebelión con la toma del Cuzco, el miedo que sentían los españoles nada más de verlo . . . 'pero siempre hay traidores', dijo él. '¿Qué le hicieron?' Pregunté. Mi abuelo . . . miró mi muñeco Entonces salió con dirección a su cuarto y trajo unos pabilos. 'Para que nadie volviera a rebelarse, le dieron un escarmiento'. '¿Qué escarmiento?' 'Algo muy feo'. Mi abuelo cortó cuatro segmentos de pabito y amarró cada pedazo a las manos y las piernas de He-Man que quedó tendido mirando el techo. '¿Tienes caballos?' me pregunto. 'No, no los tengo aquí, pero podemos usar esto'. Señalé unos renos de plástico . . . mi abuelo se rascó la cabeza como dudando 'renos de Papá Noel'. Luego alzó los hombros y amarró los pabilos a cada uno. . . . '¿Qué crees que pasó?'. . . cogí dos renos, los que estaban sujetos a

los brazos. Mi abuelo tiró de los otros dos . . . los brazos salieron disparados rápidamente . . . He-Man quedó súbitamente descuartizado. . . No supe más del héroe ni de su historia hasta que un día, poco antes de nuestro viaje a Bolivia, escuché en el cuarto de mi padre una voz que provenía de la casetera. *Túpac Amaru regresa hoy con más fuerza y recompone sus miembros en cada uno de nosotros* (115-117).

In a satirical turn for the protagonist—and for Andean history—Tupac Amaru's quartering is reenacted by a He-Man toy and four of Santa's reindeers. Tupac Amaru II, the hero of colonial uprisings, a transcendental symbol of indigenous rebelliousness and the fights against neocolonial practices, neoliberalism included, is reduced to a dismembered *gringo* figurine. The seemingly innocent episode illustrates continuous historical confrontations and uses of a contemporaneity that cannot shake off the symbols of a neoliberal sway. In this context, the little Morante embodied new generations that cannot—and perhaps do not want to—shake off recent neoliberal influences but embrace them instead. The protagonist does not only protest the fragmentation of his toy and history. He reconstructs it and glue it back together.

In various ways, Morante's memories reveal the tensions within his ideological genealogy, inherited from his father and grandfather, a synecdoche for his country's ideological genealogy. Thus, in addition to the reconstruction of Che Guevara's remains and the reenactment of Tupac Amaru's sacrifice, there is an investigation about the father's past: "un periodista de izquierda que admiraba mucho a Fidel Castro' . . . y que termina con un retrato matizado y desconcertante: el de un miembro del MRTA no ajeno a la violencia, cuya lealtad a Cuba se ve minada por su rol como informante de la CIA' (Castañeda 159). Even in the father's character one may see the contradiction and sudden change in ideological positions. Morante's dad, as described in the novel, resembles the historical figure of Eudocio Ravines, a former Peruvian revolutionary from the mid twenty century who went from being a leftist revolutionary to CIA's informant. His story has been recently fictionalized in another novel *El camarada Jorge y el dragón* (2023) by Rafael Dumett.

Tensions persist not only between forces and symbols representing the USA–USSR hostilities but also between the notion of memory as a fixed product and the place and mobility of the migrant character, who triggers and enacts a historical revision. There is no doubt about the impact of political, economic, and cultural confrontations as causes of migration: readers can imagine a revolutionary father fleeing Peruvian authorities and a young Morante seeking professional opportunities in the northern country. Thus, the novel offers a space to rethink how different forms of displacement, first to Bolivia and then the USA, generate spatial folds from where to reclaim non-official and more confrontational memories. Such a reclamation offers perspectives that are simultaneously distinct from official narratives and not entirely oppositional to neoliberalism. In a way, Morante's memories are not strictly aligned with either communist or capitalist forces, but reflect the sociohistorical gaps left by their confrontations and the resulting displacements. There is equal disenchantment and compliance.

The transnational connections established through Iván's migration from Peru to Bolivia and, later the USA, underpin effective challenges to political and economic views from the left and the right. In this way, Robles and his semi-autobiographical character transform a migration story into a tool of for the recovery of myths and history—Tupac Amaru, Inkarrí, or Che Guevara—as well as for the confrontation of fabricated stories, such as those of his pioneer school and other cultural confrontations that require attention. In fact, it is worth noting that the novel begins this way:

[U]n día se conocerá mi historia. . . . mi pasado . . . será una suerte de parábola dócil que ayude a explicar o entender ciertas cosas, ciertas vibraciones de la historia, ciertas insignias que nos dieron protección y fe. . . . lo que yo escriba no tendrá mayor efecto . . . en el acto de instalar la fábula en los imaginarios que corresponda. . . . no soy quien para contar un relato que a estas alturas no me pertenece. . . . solo estuve en el lugar y en el instante justos, en las coordenadas precisas, y caminé en esos márgenes y actué según los usos -¿husos? - que me tocaron entonces. (Robles 13)



Lorena Cuya Gavilano, “Losing the *locus*, Recovering Ideologies: Displacements in Peruvian and Bolivian Literature of the Post-Cold War,” *New Area Studies* 5:2 (2026).

The protagonist’s mnemonic exercises reveal no absolute historical truth or untruth, no ideological alignment. They reflect a process of liberation from epistemological manipulations representing an ideologically polarized world. The protagonist’s enthralling memories are, thus, a battlefield of ideological confrontations that continue to disenchant migrants from and within Andean countries today.

Migrants’ *loci*: Reimaginings

To appreciate literary stories of displacement as sociocultural documents, one must assume, first, that, today, national borders are actually not located, that they go beyond concrete delineated frontiers. In such un-grounded realities, any sense of identity is derived not necessarily from the locative, but from what can offer communal permanence—be that a memory, a story, a myth, or belief shared with friends or a whole community. One can be located in the moment and new locale in which the transmission of a story touches us—I use ‘us’ because, my person is also that of a migrant scholar, a migrant intellectual. This situation or ‘un-situadness’ generates, thus, a need to situate the de-localized self and literatures of displacement. The problem is that it may not be possible to fulfil such a need at all and, if it is done, there may be ethical consequences to the categorization entrapment. There is, nevertheless, an urgency, an ethical call, to understand and make visible the situation or ‘un-situadness’ of Andean authors and Andean narratives of displacements.

As described here, historical revisionism and the recuperation of myths are, curiously and coincidentally, aesthetic and rhetorical tools to recreating the migrants’ resistance, but also their flexible and adaptable character. As seen in this analysis, the stabilization of the migrant identity is derived not—so much or at all—from a current territoriality, but from located memories. What Robles and Rodríguez-Carmona illustrate, for instance, are iterations of myths and (hi)stories. Those may be seen as echoes of national feelings, but no nationalistic feelings *per se*. It is in that sense that these narratives go beyond delineated geopolitical borders and, furthermore, built transnational networks that juxtapose the ancestral and the neoliberal. They become a new form of *ch’ixi*, a motley and variegated reality.

Acknowledging the inherently violent merging of neoliberal and traditional Andean cultural forms is a crucial first step toward advancing the study of Andean literatures of displacement, the transnational Andes, or new Andean Area Studies. As portrayed in the works analyzed here, the polarization between right and left-wing ideologies has not been left behind but integrated in the weaving of historical colonialism. Continuing to think that a conceptual opposition to neoliberalism can actually obliterate oppression is a false hope. Reimagining myths and history as stabilizing anchors of new realities can not only help us give gravity to the Andean subject but also contribute to questioning an assimilated reality shaped by the most perverse neoliberal practices. Scholars still need to fully grasp the contradictory cultural consequences of neoliberal practices on (and of) modern Andean subjectivities.

Studies focused on the Andean region require us to reassess 'how' the intrinsic violence of neoliberal acceptance operates today—when such forcefulness has been integrated into the everyday lives of Andean people, used even as a means to regain dignity, and having permeated their literature. It is precisely from this evident reality that we should begin to consider the ethical urgency of offering a des-localized but grounded perspective on our own areas of study. The fluctuating nature of migration narratives, for instance, show with acuity the complexity of displacement and cultural situatedness. In its reimagination of cultural beliefs and historical revisions, these literatures recuperate local epistemologies granting migrants a new sense of place. This is, however, a cultural reimagination that transcends national borderlines as well as left or right-wing ideologies while focusing on the recognition of a historical *locus*. Stories of displacement centred around migrants' acts of cultural memory allow for a conscious *re*-cognition and celebration of their cultural roots. Such a powerful recognition shows one way in which the defence of culture shall, hence, lead to cultural protections, allowing people to attain dignity in ways that do not succumb to new forms of exploitation disguised as freedoms. A historical *locus* provides the ground to resist; it is an identity reminder that goes beyond contentious external bipolarities.



Lorena Cuya Gavilano, “Losing the *locus*, Recovering Ideologies: Displacements in Peruvian and Bolivian Literature of the Post-Cold War,” *New Area Studies* 5:2 (2026).

Works Cited:

Arguedas, José María and Josafat Roel Pineda. “Tres versiones del mito de Inkari.” *Ideología Mesiánica del mundo Andino. Antología*, edited by Juan Ossio, Colección Biblioteca de Antropología, 1973, pp. 219–50.

Bystrom, Kerry, et al. Introduction: The Cultural Cold War and the Global South: Sites of Contest and Communitas. *The Cultural Cold War and the Global South: Sites of Contest and Communitas*, edited by Kerry Bystrom, et al., Taylor & Francis Group, 2021, pp.1–25.

Booth, William. “Historiographical Review: Rethinking Latin America’s Cold War.” *The Historical Journal*, vol. 64, no. 4, 2022, pp. 1128–150.

Castañeda, Luis H. “La postmemoria de la izquierda latinoamericana en *Nuevos juguetes de la Guerra Fría* de Juan Manuel Robles.” *Romance Notes*, vol. 58 no. 1, 2018, p. 157-166. *Project MUSE*, <https://doi.org/10.1353/rmc.2018.0015>.

Colchado, Oscar. *Rosa Cuchillo* (1997). Alfaguara, 2007.

Cuya Gavilano, Lorena. *Fictions of Migration: Narratives of Displacement in Peru and Bolivia*. The Ohio State University Press, 2021. Kindle Edition.

De Soto, Hernando. *El otro sendero: La revolución informal*. 2nd ed., Editorial El Barranco, 1986.

Douglas, Ann. “Periodizing the American Century: Modernism, Postmodernism, and Postcolonialism in the Cold War Context.” *Modernism/Modernity*, vol. 5, no. 3, 1998, pp. 71–98.

Dumett, Rafael. *El camarada Jorge y el dragón*. Alfaguara, 2023.



Lorena Cuya Gavilano, "Losing the *locus*, Recovering Ideologies: Displacements in Peruvian and Bolivian Literature of the Post-Cold War," *New Area Studies* 5:2 (2026).

- Franco, Jean. "The Excluded Middle Intellectuals and the 'Cold War' in Latin America." *Cold War Literature: Writing the Global Conflict*, edited by Andrew Hammond, Taylor & Francis Group, 2005, pp. 226–41.
- Garland Mahlerd, Ann. *From the Tricontinental to the Global South: Race, Radicalism, and Transnational Solidarity*, Duke UP, 2018.
- Grandin, Greg. "Border Crossings and the Remaking of Latin American Cold War Studies." *Cold War History*, no. 19, 2019, pp. 141–70.
- Graziano, Frank. *The Millennial New World*. Oxford UP, 1999.
- Halperín Donghi, Tulio. "Nueva narrativa y ciencias sociales hispanoamericanas en la década del sesenta." *Más allá del boom: Literatura y mercado*, edited by David Viñas, Marcha Editores, 1981.
- Hammond, Andrew. "On the Frontlines of Writing: Introducing the Literary Cold War." *Global Cold War Literature: Western, Eastern and Postcolonial Perspectives*, edited by Andrew Hammond, Taylor & Francis Group, 2011, pp. 1–25.
- Larsen, Neil. "The 'Boom' Novel and the Cold War in Latin America." *Global Cold War Literature: Western, Eastern and Postcolonial Perspectives*, edited by Andrew Hammond, Taylor & Francis Group, 2011, pp. 100–12.
- López Baralt, Mercedes. *El Retorno del Inca Rey: Mito y profecía en el mundo andino*. Hisbol, 1989.
- McClennen, Sophia A. "Inter-American Studies or Imperial American Studies?" *Comparative American Studies An International Journal*, vol. 3, no. 4, 2005, pp. 393–413, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1477570005058954>.
- Mignolo, Walter. *Desobediencia epistémica. Retórica de la modernidad, lógica de la colonialidad y gramática de la descolonialidad*. Ediciones del Signo, 2014.



Lorena Cuya Gavilano, "Losing the *locus*, Recovering Ideologies: Displacements in Peruvian and Bolivian Literature of the Post-Cold War," *New Area Studies* 5:2 (2026).

Monasterios, Elizabeth. "Unexpected (and Perhaps Unwanted) Revisionisms: La Contramarcha Vanguardista De Gamaliel Churata y Arturo Borda." *MLN* vol. 130, no. 2, 2015, pp. 316–39.

Moreiras, Alberto. *The Exhaustion of Difference, The Politics of Latin American Cultural Studies*. 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780822380597>.

Oliveira, Felipe Antunes de. "The Rise of the Latin American Far-Right Explained: Dependency Theory Meets Uneven and Combined Development." *Globalizations*, vol. 16, no. 7, 2019, pp. 1145–64, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2019.1567977>.

Ortega, Julio. *Adiós Ayacucho*. (1986). Fondo De Cultura Económica 2018.

Ossio, Juan, editor. *Ideología Mesiánica del mundo Andino. Antología*. Colección Biblioteca de Antropología, 1973.

Pease, Franklin. "Prólogo." *Edición anotada de la Nueva Crónica y Buen Gobierno de Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala*, edited by Franklin Pease, Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1980, pp. ix–lxxiii.

Piette, Adam. *The Literary Cold War, 1945 to Vietnam*. Edinburgh UP, 2009.

Piñeiro, Juan Pablo. *Cuando Sara Chura despierte*. 2003. 4th ed., Editorial 3600, 2015.

Pulido Herráez, Begoña, and Carlos Huamán. *Mito, utopía y memoria en las literaturas bolivianas*. Universidad Autónoma de México, 2013.

Rafael, Vicente L. "The Cultures of Area Studies in the United States." *Social Text*, no. 41, 1994, pp. 91–111. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.2307/466834>. Accessed 25 Nov. 2024.



Lorena Cuya Gavilano, "Losing the *locus*, Recovering Ideologies: Displacements in Peruvian and Bolivian Literature of the Post-Cold War," *New Area Studies* 5:2 (2026).

Restrepo, James. "Identity and Collective Memory in Jorge Sanjinés' *La Nación Clandestina*." *A Contra Corriente*, vol. 8, no. 2, 2011, pp. 129–44.

Ribeiro, Darcy. *The Americas and Civilization*. Translated by Linton Lomas Barrett and Marie McDavid Barrett, E. P. Dutton, 1971.

Rivera Cusicanqui, Silvia. *Ch'ixinakax Utxiwa Una Reflexión Sobre Prácticas y Discursos Descolonizadores*. Tinta limón ediciones, 2010, <https://chixinakax.files.wordpress.com/2010/07/silvia-rivera-cusicanqui.pdf>.

Rivera Cusicanqui, Silvia. "De Tupac Katari a Evo Morales. Política indígena en los Andes." *Bolivia en el inicio del Pachakuti: La larga lucha anticolonial de los pueblos aimara y quechua*, edited by Esteban Ticona, Kindle ed., Pensamiento crítico, 2011, pp. 61–112.

Robles, Juan Manuel. *Nuevos juguetes de la Guerra Fría*. Seix Barral, 2016.

Rodríguez-Carmona, Antoine. *El blues del minibús*. Plural Editores, 2015.

Rodríguez, Raquel, et al. "La forma multitud de la política de las necesidades vitales." *El retorno de la Bolivia plebeya*. Muela del Diablo Editores, 2000, pp. 34–49.

Roncagliolo, Santiago. *Abril rojo*. Alfaguara, 2006.

Soruco Sologuren, Ximena. *La ciudad de los cholos: Mestizaje y colonialidad en Bolivia, siglos XIX y XX*. IFEA, 2011.

Stahler-Sholk, Richard, et al., "Introduction." In Stahler-Sholk, Richard, et al., editors. *Latin American Social Movements in the Twenty-First Century: Resistance, Power, Democracy*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2008.



Lorena Cuya Gavilano, "Losing the *locus*, Recovering Ideologies: Displacements in Peruvian and Bolivian Literature of the Post-Cold War," *New Area Studies* 5:2 (2026).

Thomson, Sinclair. *The Bolivia Reader*. Kindle Edition. Durham, NC.: Duke University Press, 2018.

Turner, Victor. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. 1969. Cornell University Press, 1977.

Toland, John. *Adolf Hitler: The Definitive Biography*. Anchor Books, 1992. pp. 1-18.

Vargas Llosa, Mario. "Prólogo." *El otro sendero: La revolución informal*. 2nd ed., Editorial El Barranco, 1986, pp. xvii–xxix.

Walcott, Derek. *Collected Poems, 1948–1984*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, Macmillan Publishing Company, 1986.